
T W O
Q U E S T I O N S,

Previous to Dr. MIDDLETON'S

F R E E E N Q U I R Y, &c.

TWO
QUESTIONS

Previous to Dr. Middleton's
FREE ENQUIRY, &c.

700. e. 23.
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T W O
Q U E S T I O N S,

Previous to Dr. MIDDLETON'S

F R E E E N Q U I R Y,

Impartially Considered:

V I Z.

What are the Grounds upon which the
CREDIBILITY of MIRACLES, *in general*,
is founded?

A N D

Upon what Grounds the MIRACLES of the
GOSPEL, *in particular*, are credible?

To which is added,

A DISSERTATION upon *Mark xvi.*
17, 18. These Signs shall follow them that
believe, &c.

Dr. A. A. Sykes

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in
Sincerity. EPHES. vi. 24.

L O N D O N:

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M D C C L.

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THE
PREFACE.

I*T is not my Design in the following Papers to concern myself in the Controversy betwixt the Reverend Dr. MIDDLETON and his Adversaries, about the Continuance of the miraculous Powers in the Church of Christ. All who have hitherto appeared against the Doctor, agree in one thing, viz. in disapproving Mr. Locke's, and the Doctor's Opinion, that They ceased with, or about the End of the Apostolic Age; but no Two are agreed in the Point, How long they continued after. The learned Mr. Jackson does not contend for their Continuance below the Times of Origen, i. e. to the Year of Christ 250, or thereabouts. The Second that appeared against the Doctor carries them to the End of the Third Century, i. e. about*

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about Fifty Years longer. Mr. Dodwell, who has wrote against his Adversary with a Temper highly commendable, extends the Age of Miracles to the Civil Establishment of Christianity; and adds, that "probably many wonderful Works were afterwards wrought for some great Ends." Mr. Church says—"We have reason to think that [the Power of Miracles] stopped SOME TIME AFTER the Civil Establishment of our Religion." And lastly, Mr. Whiston, with great Precision and Exactness, determines the Continuance of the true Christian Miracles to have been till the Year 383, i. e. till Seventy Years after the first Establishment of Christianity; and he assures us, that then the demoniacal, and Anti-christian, the Athanasian, Popish, Diabolical Miracles, or Wonders, began. It were to be wished, that He had told us, what the Difference is to a Spectator, betwixt a demoniacal Wonder, and a true Miracle; and by what Mark one might have distinguished an Antichristian from a True Miracle. But here we are left in the dark. However, as these learned Writers are all unanimous in Opposition to Dr. Middleton, and All declare that Miracles did not cease at the Age in which the Doctor says they did, one would naturally think that some Two of Them
at

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at least who argue so strenuously against him, should have agreed together about the Time, when so remarkable an Incident happened, as the ceasing of a Power so wonderful as the working of Miracles was. But fix upon the Hypothesis of which of these learned Gentlemen you will, you are sure to have Four out of Five against the Scheme you pitch on: And tho' These Writers have stopped as They have done, there are Others who have carried this Point to the End of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries; and they too think that there is strong Attestation given by the Fathers of Those Ages to the Miracles then said to be worked. And we all know that the Defenders of the Church of Rome assert and maintain this Power to be continued in That Church, even to This Day.

Perhaps Some may think it needless to determine a Point of this intricate Nature; and Some may think it impossible: And All will be apt to think, that an honest, able Man's Word of the Fourth or Fifth Century, is as much to be credited, as an honest, able Man's Word of the Second or Third, in a like Case. But, as I said, it is not my Design to enter into the Controversy between the Doctor and His Adversaries. If the Doctor be thought to have done wrong, in not having secured sufficiently
the

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the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, His Adversaries would have done well to have supplied that Defect.

As to my own Design, it is to shew the Credibility of the Miracles done by Christ and his Apostles: And as I could not do this without examining into the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, in general, stands, I was obliged to enter into That Question. And if the Miracles of the Gospel be once secured, the rest, I apprehend, may be considered as Matters of less moment; and a Man may be allowed to be a sincere Christian, who doubts of, or even denies, many a Miracle reported by either an Antient or Modern Historian.

Two QUESTIONS, previous
to Dr. MIDDLETON'S *Free En-*
quiry, impartially considered.

QUESTION I.

THE First Question, which ought
to be considered, and which seems
to be of no small Consequence, is,
What are the Grounds, upon which
the Credibility of Miracles, in general, is
founded?

There is certainly a particular Difficulty in
Enquiries about the *Credibility of Miracles* :
They are not only *unusual* Works, but *extra-*
ordinary, and beyond the Power of Man to
do ; and therefore *common Evidence* is very
rarely enough to satisfy a fair and candid En-
quirer, when he is searching, whether any
Man did perform the miraculous Works report-
ed of him. It seems to be a fair Question, and
not to be answered with a *Jest*, which St.

B

Austin

Austin puts, as from some Unbelievers ^a,
 “ Why, say they, are not those Miracles,
 “ which you say were done formerly, now
 “ done?” His Answer was ^b, “ He, that re-
 “ quires Miracles to be done *now*, in order
 “ to his Belief, is himself a great *Miracle*,
 “ who does not believe when *all the World*
 “ *believes*.” And then, without entering in-
 to the Grounds of the Credibility of Miracles,
 he refers to the *Scriptures* ^c, “ wherein what
 “ was done, and for the Belief of what Mi-
 “ racles were done,” is amply related.

Testimony, no doubt, has in all Cases its
 proper Weight: but as Truth or Falshood
 may be equally reported, and all things rela-
 ted are not therefore to be believed, merely
 because they are related, where-ever things
out of the common Course of Nature are told,
 they are in themselves liable to *Doubt* and
Suspicion: and as they are rather incredible
 than credible at the first View, every one
 has a Right to examine and see, whether there
 is not some magnifying of Incidents, or some
 Fraud, or Imposition, or some Trick made
 use of, which we are not able immediately to
 account for. The *Scriptures*, as St. *Austin*
 says,

^a Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula, quæ prædicatis facta
 esse, non fiunt? *Aug. De Civit. Dei*, l. xxii. c. 8.

^b Quisquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquit, magnum est
 ipse prodigium, qui mundo credente non credit. *Ibid.*

^c In eisdem quippe veracissimis libris cuncta conscripta
 sunt, & quæ facta sunt, & propter quod credendum facta
 sunt. *Ibid.*

says ^d, “ are indeed read, that they may be
 “ believed; nor would they be read, unless
 “ they were believed.” But yet every Man
 has a Right to enquire and to examine even
 into Them: and the Scriptures themselves
 commend the Piety and Care of the *Beræans*,
 who *searched the Scriptures daily, whether the*
things preached by the Apostles were so, as
 they declared them.

Hence a Necessity arises of examining into
 the *Possibility*, or the *Probability* of Facts re-
 ported: and it is on all hands allowed, that
 where one sees an *Impossibility* of any Fact,
 there all Assent ought to be denied; where
 one sees *no Impossibility* in the nature of the
 thing, there a high degree of *Improbability*
 will produce the same Effect. Now this is
 certainly the Method of proceeding in all *com-*
mon Cases; indeed in all, except where Mi-
 racles are concerned. But in this Particular,
 mere *Improbability* of the thing is not deemed
 sufficient to destroy all Credit; but one must
 consider either the *Impossibility* of the thing's
 being done, or its *Absurdity*, or its being *un-*
worthy the Interposition of Providence, or of
 any superior intelligent Being, who may be
 supposed to act in such a Case, or some such
 Reason, in order to determine its *Incredibi-*
lity.

B 2

It

^d Leguntur quippe in populis, ut credantur; nec in populis
 tamen nisi credita legerentur. Ibid.

It is hard to fix exactly the Limits of *Probability* even in natural Cases, since there are so many Cases, *uncommon*, and *extraordinary*, and vouched by so good Testimonies, that how much soever a Man may be at first surpris'd, yet upon consideration he cannot tell how to refuse his Assent. The Story is well attested of *Prusias*, Son of *Prusias*, King of *Bithynia*, that ^e " he had, instead of upper
 " Teeth, one Bone extended thro' all his
 " upper Jaw, which answered equally well
 " the Use of Teeth, and was not at all disagreeable to the Sight." It may be hard to account for such a Fact; but since we see Nature abounds in extraordinary Productions, and such a thing is not *impossible*, and Bones shoot out and grow in all Creatures in a very unaccountable manner, we easily, in these Cases, assent to what we conceive possible, if the Witnesses of the Fact are credible.

But tho' we give our Assent to *uncommon* things of this nature, yet Stories are such sometimes, that no Vouchers are sufficient to gain Credit. Thus when Historians invent Accounts of things done before the Flood; or tell us of Giants 90, or 100, or 120 feet tall; or of Angels lying with Women, and getting Children on them; of *Egregori*, &c. —there certainly

^e Nam & Prusiæ Regis Bithyniæ filius, eodem nomine quo pater, pro superiori ordine Dentium unum os æqualiter extensum habuit, nec ad speciem deformem, neque ad usum ulla ex parte incommodum. *Valerius Max.* lib. i. c. 8.

certainly is a great want of Evidence for such Facts. And tho' one may believe a Man to have been *Ten* feet tall, yet when any Author tells us of Men *Ten times Ten* feet tall, he seems to be no more worthy of Credit, than another is, who tells us of *Pygmies*, or of Men less than *Pygmies*, or no bigger than one's *Thumb*; which seem equally the Subjects of Belief with those of the opposite Extreme; the one being much about as credible as the other.

The Difficulty is not lessened, but increased, when *Miracles* are related as performed by any Man, how strongly soever they may be vouched by Men of Reputation, in other respects. These are Facts, that seem beyond the Bounds of *common Probability*; and therefore they usually meet with small Credit, unless they have very particular Circumstances attending them. The best *Heathen* Writers give us Instances of Miracles done by *Vestal Virgins*, by *Roman Emperors*, and by many particular private Persons; and yet their Testimonies are not sufficient to gain any Credit to their Relations with *Christians*. Or if they report to us the Apparitions of their Gods, or that *Castor* and *Pollux*, *e. gr.* helped the *Roman* Dictator at the Lake *Regillus*, and routed their Enemies, —it is thought more likely to be the *General's*, or somebody's Fiction, rather than a real Appearance of those Deities; and the Attestation of *Roman* Historians to the
Story

Story goes for little more than Fable or Romance, notwithstanding ^f “ the very Mark of “ the Hoof of *Castor*’s Horse was shewn at “ *Regillus* upon a Stone there.”

Nor, if Miracles are attested with all the Circumstances of *Persons*, and *Times*, and *Places*, minutely set down, is this sufficient to gain Credit. For it is certain, that many so particularly described, stand condemned as Fabulous Reports; and their Historians are not of sufficient Authority to have the Assent of their Readers. And if the *Po-pish* Miracles, or any of the ancient *Heathen* ones, are rejected as Fabulous, notwithstanding such minute and particular Evidence; it will follow, that in order to make *Testimony* credible in behalf of *Miracles*, something must be produced, that may point out, which are to be admitted, and which are to be rejected, when the Accounts of them are equally minute and circumstantial.

Some of the Miracles of *Apollonius* of *Ty-ana* were such, that the *Pagans* of old seemed to triumph over the *Christians* in them, and frequently made a Parallel betwixt Them and Those of Christ; and even gave the Preference to the Philosopher, as acting at least the more able and dextrous Part, and applying the miraculous Powers he had, more like
a wise

^f Illud in filice quod hodie apparet apud Regillum, tanquam vestigium ungulæ Castoris Equi. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* l. 3. c. 5.

a wise and knowing Man, than *Jesus* did. The Impostor, *e. g.* § “ when called into
 “ Judgment before *Domitian*, who designed
 “ to punish him, suddenly disappeared in the
 “ Courts of Justice, conveying himself away;
 “ whereas *Jesus*, when brought before *Pi-*
 “ *late*, was condemned and crucified.” This
 shews how little the *Heathens* understood the
 Reason of our Saviour’s *Death*, and what Use
 they thought his miraculous Powers were to
 be applied to. They tell us of *Apollonius* ^h
 “ understanding the Voices of Animals:”
 “ his ⁱ “ understanding all Languages:” his
 “ ^k raising a Girl, that was dead, to Life at
 “ *Rome*:” and his ^l “ casting out Devils.”
Eusebius easily refutes all this, and more of
 such Pretensions, by shewing the *Absurdity*
 and *Folly* of *Apollonius*’s Actions. And tho’ it
 is certain ^m, that he received great Honours,
 both during his Life and after his Death, be-
 ing honoured *as a God* ^m, and this is credited
 upon the Authority of good Writers; yet few
 or none are so weak, as to believe the Relati-
 ons

§ Qui [Apollonius] cum Domitianus eum punire vellet, repente in Judiciis non comparuit:—Ille [Christus]—& comprehensus est & cruci affixus. *Lact.* l. v. c. 3.

^h Καὶ ἐς σύνεσιν τῆς ζώων φωνῆς ἦλθε. Hierocles apud Euseb. lib. i.

ⁱ Πασῶν γλώσσων συνεὶς. Ibid. è lib. 2.

^k Ἐπὶ τῇ Ῥωμαίων πόλει καὶ ταῦτα Κόρειον — καὶ θάνατον οὗ ἰδόντες ζῶν ἤγαγον. Ibid. è lib. 4. Ille mortuis vitam reddidit. *Vopisc. in Aurelian.*

^l Δαίμονας δ’ ἀπὸ πλάσσει. Euseb. è lib. 4.

^m Vid. *Bayle’s Dict.* APOLLONIUS. Note F. F.

ons made by the same Writers, where any of his *Miracles* are mentioned. Now why are not the same Authors to be equally credited in the one Case, as the other?

But let us pass to the *Miracles* reported to be done by the *Papists*. They are told with so many Circumstances, as to *Time*, *Place*, *Person*, *Manner*, and vouched by Men of such Eminence upon an *exact* and *minute* Search, that if strong Attestation were sufficient to gain Credit to such Facts, it would be hard to deny it to what they relate. The Life of *Francis Xavier*, who first carried the Gospel into *India* and *Japan*, is wrote by *Horatius Tursellinus* " " with as much *Faithfulness* and *Diligence* as he could apply." And tho' he was not an *Eye-witness* of the Facts he relates, yet They were such, as were communicated by the King of *Portugal's* Order by his Deputy Governor in *India*, or by such as were at those Times " " either in " *Cbina* or *Japan*, and which *Horace* inserted in their proper Places in a subsequent " Edition of his Book." How many *Miracles* did this *Holy* Man, this Man of *extraordinary*

ⁿ Scripseram Xaverii vitam quanta maxima potui vel Diligentia vel Fide. Horatii Tursellini Vita Xaverii. Præf.

^o Lusitani Regis Jussu ab Indiæ Prorege egregia Francisci facta conquirerentur, ea ferme perscripta sunt, quæ ille in Lusitana ditione præclare gesserat.—Itaque cum nuper hæc quoque ab his, qui per id tempus apud Sinas vel Japonos versabantur, conscripta in manus meas aliquando pervenissent, feci—ut ea—in Latinum converterem, & cum fide suis intexerem locis. *Ibid.*

ordinary Piety, work, if his *Faithful* Historian may be believed? P “ It is evident enough, “ that many sick in that Coast were healed “ by him : many possessed were cured. There “ is a Report, neither *obscure* nor *dubious*, “ that there were *Three Men raised from the “ Dead*, besides a Girl, of whom I shall “ speak hereafter. — A young Man, of no “ mean Fortune, died, who presently being “ brought to *Francis*, with great Lamenta- “ tion was laid at his Feet. The *Father* “ [*Francis*] taking him by the Hand, bid “ him in the Name of Christ arise : The “ young Man immediately arose, being re- “ stored to Life.” — “ A Boy fell into a “ Well, and died : He [*Francis*] bid the “ Mother be of good cheer, and told her, that “ the Boy was not dead. *Francis* went to “ the Woman’s House ; fell on his Knees, “ and having spent some time in Prayer, “ signed the lifeless Boy’s Body with the Sign “ of the Cross : immediately the Boy leaped “ out of the Coffin, not only alive, but per- “ fectly well.” There is no occasion to mention at large other Miracles, which he did,

C

or

P Satis constat plurimos ab eo in illa maritima ora *ægros* sanatos esse ; multos *energumenos* liberatos. Nec obscura aut dubia fama est tres inibi excitatos à mortuis præter puellam Cangoximanam, de qua suo loco dicetur. — Hic adolescens quidam minime obscuro loco natus mortem obierat. Qui confestim ad Franciscum delatus à suis, cum ingenti complo- ratione ante ejus pedes ponitur. Itaque cum Pater manu prehensum

or is said to have done : Such are, 1 " his Cure
 " of *Michael Fernandes* of the Stone. He gave
 " a Lame Man the Power of Walking ; to
 " Two Dumb Men the Power of Speaking ;
 " to Two Deaf Men the Power of Hearing ;
 " and to many, that were at the Point of
 " Death, when there were no Hopes of Re-
 " covery, did he restore Health of Body, ei-
 " ther by the Sign of the Cross, or by sprink-
 " ling them with Holy Water." It is need-
 less, I say, to recite more from the same Au-
 thority : he assures us of the Witnesses, who
 were present at the Performance of several of
 these miraculous Operations. Their Names
 are specified, who bore their Testimonies to
 the Truth of these Facts ; and yet none but a
professed

prehensum Christi nomine surgere jubet. Ille continuo sur-
 git haud dubie redivivus.—Ibidem Christiana mulier Franciscum adiit, & flens ac suam orbitatem deplorans, suppliciter obsecrabat, ut ad parvum filium suum nuper in puteo extinctum accedere non gravaretur. Tum ille negans puerum esse mortuum, bono esse animo mulierem jubet, eique protinus morem gerit. Ad ejus testa ubi ventum est, procumbit in genua. Deum aliquandiu precatus, exanime pueri corpus signat cruce. Extemplo exhibit puer è feretro, non vivus modo sed etiam valens. *Ibid.* lib. ii. c. 7.

1 In Insula Ceilano Michaelern Fernandum, graviter ex calculo laborantem, invisens, bono animo magnaque Dei fiducia esse jussit : se postridie rem divinam pro illo facturum ; nec dubitare, quin propitiato Deo, spe maturius animi corporisque recuperaturus esset vigorem. Idque ita prorsus evenit.

Satis constant claudo ingrediendi, mutis duobus loquendi, totidem surdis audiendi facultatem, à Francisco redditam. Moribundis etiam multis ad eum deportatis, Crucis Signo, vel Aquæ Sacræ Asperfione, desperatam sanitatem corporis restitutam. *Ibid.* lib. vi. c. 2.

professed Papist believes a tittle of these Stories.

We may take a second Instance from the Life of *Antony of Padua*, as he is commonly called. This Saint's Life is filled with Miracles, vouched by Men of Character and Fortune and Figure in the World. It was wrote first in *Spanish* by *Michael Pithecius*, Counsellor to his Catholic Maiefty; then translated into *Italian* by *Francis Maria Vicius*; afterwards it was turned into the *German Language* by the very noble *John Baptist Burchet*, Assessor of the Greater Senate of *Lucern*; and, lastly, made *Latin* by the Conventual Brethren of *Lucern*. Who would not imagine, that there might be some Truth in the Miracles of this Saint? They are vouched very solemnly; and ^r "Antiquity, " that invented the Fables of *Orpheus's* moving Rocks and Woods, and *Arion* Dolphins, with their Music," is treated as it deserves. But, says my Author, "the Fact " was true in the Case of *Antony*; for he called the *Beasts*, and *They* hearkened most attentively to him; and his Voice was of

C 2

" such

^r Finxit fecunda fabularum Antiquitas petras & sylvulas Orphei musicis concentibus excitas, illececos etiam fidibus Arionis Delphinos—quo vellent obaudire. Fabula sunt hæc, & à veritate remotissima. —Attamen hic in veritate se res habebat. —Siquidem Antonius Bestias accersit, quæ promptissimis & attentis auribus auscultant. Tantarum erat vox ejus virum, cui vel Piscium horum natura libenter obsecundaret, *Vita & Miracula S. Antonii de Padua*, p. 86.

“ such Force, that even *Fish* obeyed him.”
 One may well apply to him, what *Horace*
 said on another occasion,

*O mutis quoque Piscibus
 Donature cygni, si libeat, sonum.
 Totum muneris hoc tui est.*

Lib. iv. Od. 3.

I mention not these Follies with any other View, than to shew what Nonsense, what Absurdity, has been obtruded on the World under the Pretence of History: and to observe, at the same time, that the Historian, who may be credited in *ordinary* Occurrences, yet is not to be trusted or believed without strict Examination, when he relates extraordinary Facts. What bears him out in the One Case, will not gain him Credit in the Other, unless he can produce something very peculiar and extraordinary to vouch for what he relates. On the other hand, it is not enough in the Reader of such miraculous Stories to say, as Bishop *Atterbury*^s did—“ In
 “ *China* or *Japan* these Wonder-workers may
 “ pretend to have done as many Miracles as
 “ they please, without the fear of a Discover-
 “ ry: in *Spain* or *Italy* they may venture
 “ now and then to set up for them, when there
 “ are so many always ready to favour their
 “ Pretences,

^s Vid. *Atterbury*'s Sermons published by Dr. *Moore*, Vol. I.
 Sermon. 1. p. 18, 19.

“ Pretences, and to run into any pious Fraud
 “ that can be contrived for them :”—it is not
 just, I say, to argue thus. For if *real* Mi-
 racles be done any where, at *Jerusalem* or
Smyrna, in *Africa* or in *Egypt*, this way of
 raising a Difficulty or Objection will equally
 lie against them all ; since no Man is obliged
 to go from home, in order to discover a Fraud,
 or to be convinced of a Truth. This sort of
 Common-place Topic shews more of Con-
 tempt of, than of Argument against, a Fact ;
 and, as Miracles may be true, tho’ done at a
 distance ; so what is represented as such, and
 done at home, may be the Effect of Fraud
 and Imposition.

Sometimes indeed there are particular Cir-
 cumstances, which give plain and just ground
 to suspect, nay even to deny, that a Man did
 ever any Miracles at all, notwithstanding some
 are confidently reported to be done by Him.
Ribadeneira the *Jesuit*, when he was a Boy,
 “ not above Fourteen Years of Age, was
 “ brought to be familiarly acquainted with
 “ *Ignatius* of *Loyola*, and was present with
 “ him at home, abroad, in all things obser-
 “ ving his Words, his Actions, his Counte-
 “ nance, and his Motions.” This made it,
 that he was enabled to know his *intimatest*
 Affairs, and what *few* only could come at the
 true Knowledge of, as well as those things,
 that were open, and easily known to all. All
Ignatius’s Disciples were greatly desirous of
 knowing

knowing every minute thing, which any ways related to his Life and Actions; by what Means, and by what Beginnings, and by what Progress he had brought about his Schemes. *Ribadeneira* accordingly tells us,^t “ That with the greatest Diligence he had
 “ searched into all things relating to *Ignatius* :
 “ that he had desired, and importuned, and
 “ insisted on *Ignatius*’s telling the Course of
 “ his Life; and that he had obtained this Fa-
 “ vour of him.” In this Life therefore one might be sure to meet with an Account of the *Miracles*, which *Ignatius* did, if ever he performed any. And it is very remarkable, that when *Ribadeneira* comes at last to give the Character of this Saint, he puts the Question, — “ How comes it to pass, that the Holiness of this Man is not attested by Miracles; and His Life, as well as those of many Saints, is not made famous by Signs, and the Manifestations of great Powers.” It is plain, that *Ribadeneira*, with all his Industry and Opportunity, had never heard of any Miracles done by *Ignatius*; for if he had, he would

^t Quamobrem summa diligentia res omnes Ignatii investigavimus, & ex eo ipso præteritæ vitæ rationes tantopere audire cupivimus, postulavimus, efflagitavimus. Ipse vero continuis precibus, & ardenti nostrorum studio cessit tandem, & se vinci passus est. *Ribadeneira Vit. Ignatii*, p. 12.

^u Quid causæ est, quamobrem illius [Ignatii] Sanctitas minus est testata Miraculis; &, ut multorum Sanctorum, Vita signis declarata, virtutumque Operationibus insignita? *Ibid.* Lib. v. c. 13.

would certainly have inserted them. But instead of That, he makes a long Apology for his not having exerted such a Power. " That " God alone knows at what Place, and what " Time, and by whose Prayers, Miracles " should be done : " That " *John* the *Bap-* " *tist*, than whom a greater was not born of " Women, did no Miracle : " That " very " many others, most Holy Men, Lights and " Ornaments of the Catholic Church, had " been entirely unknown, if the Light of " Miracles had been necessary to illustrate " their Glory. What Miracles do we read " of St. *Austin* ? What of *Athanasius*, *Chry-* " *ostom*, the Two *Gregories*, of *Nazianzen* " and *Nyssa* ? " And much is there said to this purpose.

It may be said, perhaps, that *Ribadeneira*, like a faithful and just Historian, related what had come to his Knowledge : but it does not follow, because *He* knew nothing of any miraculous Powers exerted by *Ignatius*, that therefore the Holy Man never did exert any such Virtue.

This is true : But it must be observed, that *Ribadeneira* first published his Life of *Ignatius* in 1572 ; and Fifteen Years afterwards, viz. in 1587, he republished it by the Command of *Claudius Aquaviva*, and added many things, which w " certain grave Men, in- " timately

^w Libellum hunc de vita Ignatii—ante annos quindecim—
Latine conscripsi—Multa mihi necessario addenda judicavi.
Primum

“ intimately acquainted with *Ignatius*, and, as
 “ it were, *Eye-witnesses*, told him.” He
 thought these things of such Importance, that
 they were “ necessarily” to be *added*, as a
 Supplement to what he had before said.
 “ Some things, which had appeared *dubious*
 “ to him, he now found, upon an exact
 “ Search, to be *certain*, and he was fully sa-
 “ tisfied in.” And, lastly, he “ added some
 “ Sayings, and some Facts of *Ignatius*, with
 “ regard to the Discipline and Government
 “ of a Holy Life, and the Art and Skill of
 “ governing others.” Had *Ribadeneira* there-
 fore ever heard of any *Miracles* done by *Ignatius*,
 (who died in 1556, that is, Sixteen
 Years before the Publication of his Life) he
 would certainly have related them in his
 Book published in 1572; and much more
 would he have *added* them, could he have
 heard of any such, after so diligent a Search,
 when he *republished* his Book in 1587. If
 later Writers therefore attribute Miracles to
Ignatius, one may justly impute them to In-
 vention and Imposition; since a Writer, will-
 ing to do all the Honour he could to his
 Friend, was not able to find any Instance of
 such

Primum nova quædam, quæ, post libellum excusum, gravissi-
 mi viri, & Ignatio valde familiares — quasi testes oculati de
 ipso Ignatio nobis retulerunt. Tum alia, quæ dubia antea
 mihi erant, & diligenti postea inquisitione investigata, certa
 esse comperi. Deinde etiam nonnulla dicta factaque Ignatii
 adjeci, quæ ad sanctissimæ vitæ pertinent disciplinam, & ad
 præstantem alios gubernandi prudentiam. *Ibid. Præf.* 1587.

such Power exerted by him; or one may reasonably deny, or at least suspect such Facts, since they were unknown to those who lived within *Thirty Years* of his Death. Father *Boubours* therefore may pretend to tell us of Miracles done by *Ignatius*: He may talk of his “dispossessing Devils from Persons;” of his “driving away evil Spirits, which haunted the College of *Loretto*, by the public reading of his Letters in the House;” of his “recovering a Man that had Hanged himself, by his praying to God to give him only so much Life, as might serve him to make his Confession.” A Grant! which was given, and the resuscitated Person immediately died after he had *confessed*. These, and many more, which have been reported of him by later Writers, may justly, I say, be *suspected*, because they were quite unknown to *Rabadeneira*, and others, during *Ignatius’s* Life, and many Years after his Death; or were not deemed by them to have been miraculous.

But supposing that we had not ground for *Suspicion*, from the Silence of so inquisitive a Writer, that *Ignatius* worked no Miracles; yet the things themselves, which later Authors have told, come not within any degree of Probability. *Maffei* has related a tolerable Collection of Miracles done by *Ignatius*: and he speaks of “more which were told of him; but as he was not sufficiently certain

D

“ of

“ of their Truth, he did not think himself
 “ obliged to mention them *.” When he
 says this, he seems to have some doubt about
 the Miracles of his Saint ; for he adds *This*, as
 his Reason for not mentioning what he had
 heard about *Ignatius’s* Miracles—y “ especial-
 “ ly because the Holiness of Men, famous
 “ in their Times, is not manifested so much
 “ by *Signs* and *Miracles*, as by Love of God
 “ and Innocence of Life.” A Reason this !
 which should have made *Masseius* as cautious
 of what he said about *Ignatius’s* Miracles, as
Ribadeneira had been before him.

The *Jesuits* have always been great Mi-
 racle-mongers, where-ever they have come.
 When they came into *Japan*, they no sooner
 baptized People, but some or other had Mi-
 racles worked upon them. z “ One of their
 “ new Converts, blind, thirteen Years of
 “ Age, as soon as he was baptized, received
 “ a perfect Sight.” Another, “ that had been
 “ afflicted with a Palsy two or three Months,
 “ and

* Alia item de Ignatio miranda narrantur ; quæ, quia mihi
 haud satis explorata sunt, necesse non habui adscribere. *Mas-*
seius Vita Ignatii, lib. iii. c. xiv.

y Præsertim quod clarorum hominum Sanctitas, non tam
 Signis atque Miraculis, quam charitate in Deum & vitæ Inno-
 centia continetur. *Ibid.*

z Unus ex iis, cæcus, 13 natus annos, simul ac baptizatus
 est, integrum oculorum lumen recepit. — Christianus quidam
 Paralyfi duorum triumve mensium spatio laboraverat. Is Ma-
 gicis Artibus, de gentis more, dum à propinquis curatur, eti-
 am mutus efficitur. Cujus casum miseratus item Christianus
 cœlestis aqua lavacri quam sumserat domi nostræ conspergit
 hominem. Ille surrexit statim & locutus est. *Emanuel A-*
costa, Histor. rerum in Oriente gestorum, p. 72, 74.

“ and whose Friends had tried by *Magic Arts*,
 “ as the Custom of the Nation is, to cure
 “ him; instead of a Cure, he was made
 “ Dumb. A Christian, who had Compassion
 “ on his Misfortune, sprinkled the Man with
 “ some Water of the Heavenly Font, which
 “ he took out of *our* [*i. e.* the Jesuits] House,
 “ and the Paralytic Dumb Man presently rose
 “ and spoke.” Again: a “ A Woman trou-
 “ bled with a constant Hiccough, even whilst
 “ she was eating or speaking, was cured by
 “ Baptism.” Another, that was “ possess’d,
 “ as soon as she became a Christian, the De-
 “ vil left her.”

Now the Question is, What *Credit* is due
 to this Sort of Historical Facts, or Relations?
 They are told with as much Assurance, and
 as positively asserted, as any other Facts rela-
 ted by these Historians; and yet all Prote-
 stants constantly treat these Miracles as Impo-
 sitions, or as Accidents improved, or as casu-
 al things magnified, or as Assertions without
 Grounds; and the Historians as Men not com-
 petently informed, or so far prejudiced, as not
 to be of sufficient Integrity to be believed in
these Cases, tho’ in other Historical Narrati-
 ons due Deference is paid to their Authority.

The *Jesuits* indeed are charged with la-
 bouring under a most deplorable Want of Ho-
 nesty;

D-2

* Mulierum assiduo singultu, etiam dum loqueretur & ci-
 bum caperet, jamdiu laborantem, per Baptismum eo vitio la-
 boravit. Aliam Energumenam, ut primum Christiana facta
 est, Dæmon reliquit. *Idid.* p. 109.

nesty ; and their Morality has been so bad, and their Casuistry so loose, that no one ought to depend too much on what they affirm or deny, if their Interest, or that of their Society, be any ways concerned. Say then, that *Their* Accounts of Miracles are not to be admitted. Were those Holy and Good Men, that lived *Twelve* or *Thirteen Hundred* Years ago, or perhaps a Century higher still, as little to be credited, as these Moderns, who certainly are not to be credited ? Are Those Men of old to be put upon a level with such notorious Violators of Truth, as the *Jesuits* are known to have been ? Surely, more is due to Their Characters ; and we have positive Evidences of Miracles done in *Their* Times : Miracles, wrought before good Men, able to judge, and honestly disposed to tell the whole Truth. If the Miracles related by the *Jesuits* may be suspected, or treated as Impostures ; may not those related by the Good Men of old, be vindicated to the Satisfaction of any, or every Man of Sense ?

Here it is certain we change the Scene, and get into Times that seem to bespeak Reverence and Respect. But whether the Grounds of Credibility alter with Ages, is the Point in Debate. When Men of Abilities, and Learning, and Honesty, and to all appearance good Information, relate *Miracles*, their Testimony does not, in fact, meet with that Credit, which such Characters may seem to promise ;

nor

nor do all these concurring Circumstances afford that Satisfaction (at least they do not always afford it) which a Man of Sense requires. Suppose, *e. g.* the Miracles, which are said to be done by St. *Martin* — reported by no less learned a Man than *Sulpitius Severus* — attested with all solemn *Appeals to God* for the Truth of the Facts, and of his Relation — upon *strong Evidence* — upon a Resolution to declare the *Truth* — upon a *Competence of Knowledge* to judge of the Truth — and as much *Honesty* in the Narration, as any one can reasonably ask — Does his Account of St. *Martin's* Miracles give Satisfaction to any Enquirer after Truth? ^b “ I beg, says he, of
 “ those, who shall read what I write, that
 “ they would believe what I say ; and that
 “ they would not think, that I have wrote
 “ any thing, but what I have found to be cer-
 “ tain and true : For I had rather have been
 “ quite silent, than say any thing that is
 “ false.” *Sulpitius* concludes his Life with this Profession — ^c “ I am conscious to my-
 “ self, that I was impelled by a *full Persua-*
 “ *sion* of the *Truth* of the things related,
 “ and by a *Love of Christ*, to write these
 “ things ;

^b Obsecro autem eos, qui lecturi sunt, ut fidem dictis adhibeant, neque me quicquam nisi compertum & probatum scripsisse arbitrentur : Alioquin tacere quam falsa dicere maluisssem. *Sulpit. Vit. Martini. c. 1.*

^c Ego mihi conscius sum, me rerum fide & amore Christi impulsus ut hæc scriberem, manifesta exposuisse, vera dixisse. *Ibid. apud finem.*

“ things; and I am fully convinced in my
 “ own Mind, that I have declared things
 “ well known, and have told *nothing but the*
 “ *Truth.*” There plainly runs thro’ all *Sul-*
pitius’s Discourses such an Affection for St.
Martin, and for all his Sayings, as well as
 for all his Actions, as shews him to have had
 the highest Esteem for his Person: And he
 relates every thing in such a manner, as ma-
 nifests almost an implicit Faith in him, and
 in whatever he said. When he was telling a
 miraculous Escape, that St. *Martin* had out
 of the midst of the *Flames* (the *Flames* were
 all around him, and he unhurt; and he had
 been so long in them, that the Monks con-
 cluded that he was burnt to death) when *Se-*
verus, I say, was telling this miraculous
 Escape, he appeals to ^d “ *God*, as a Witness of
 “ his Words, that the Saint himself related
 “ to him the Story, that the Fire raged a-
 “ gainst him, as long as he tried to break
 “ open the Doors to get out; but as soon as
 “ he resorted to the Help of the *Cross*, and
 “ took to the Arms of *Prayer*, the *Flames*
 “ where

^d Mediis flammis totus ad Dominum conversus incubuit.
 Tum vero divinitus igne submoto, innoxio sibi orbe flamma-
 rum orabat. Monachi—mediis flammis Martinum auferunt,
 cum jam penitus esse consumptus tam diuturno incendio pu-
 taretur. Cæterum, ut *verbis meis Dominus est testis*, mihi ip-
 se referebat—tam diu circa se sævisse ignem, quamdiu erum-
 pere Ostium turbatus mente tentaverit: Ubi vero auxilium
 Crucis & Orationis arma repetisset, medias cecidisse flammæ,
 seque tunc sensisse *rorantes*, quas male esset expertus *urentes*.
Sulpitius. Ep. 1.

“ where he stood, *all retired* from him, and
 “ he *felt* them [*rorantes*] *cool like Water*,
 “ which before he had to his great Pain felt
 “ to be *burning*.” Nor was this peculiar to
 St. *Martin* thus to feel *Fire, cold*. It is ob-
 served in the History of the Martyrdom of
 that *Apostolic Teacher, Polycarp*, that it was
 no uncommon thing for the Martyrs to
 e “ have the *Fire*, which their inhuman
 “ Torturers cast them into, *cold* to them.”
 At the Close of *Severus's First Dialogue*, in
 which he relates some Stories, not unlike roman-
 tic ones, concerning the *Eastern Monks*, he is
 preparing to give an Account of St. *Martin's*
 Virtues; and professes, that he does not so
 much design f “ to speak any thing, which he
 “ had heard from others, as what he had
 “ SEEN HIMSELF.” And so, in his *Third*
Dialogue, he declares, that “ *he will speak,*
 “ *fide Testis, non Oratoris copia, upon the*
 “ *Faith of a Witness, and not enlarging upon*
 “ *things as an Orator, c. 2.*” He then ap-
 peals to *Evagrius's* Testimony for the Truth
 of *Martin's* g “ Cure of a dumb Girl of 12
 “ Years of Age, (who never had spoken at
 “ all) by putting a little *consecrated Oil* into
 “ her Mouth, after he had exorcised her.”
 The Cure was done, *Evagrius* being present
 at

e Καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ψυχρὸν, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ βαρυνισμοῦ.
 Mart. Polycarpi.

f Nec vero audita ab aliis potius quam quæ vidi ipse dictu-
 rus sum. *Dial. i. apud finem.*

g Res ipso præsentem gesta est. c. 2.

at it. It is not much farther, in the same *Dialogue*, c. 5. that he disclaims ^h “ all telling of any *Lye* in behalf of the good Saint; “ and appeals to Christ, that he has said nothing, nor would say any thing, but what “ either He Himself had SEEN, or what he “ had come to the Knowledge of from *sure* “ *Witnesses*, or from *Martin* himself.” And he adds, that tho’ he chose “ to dress up what “ he said in the form of a Dialogue, yet I “ declare, says he, *before God*, that I keep “ to the exact Truth of an History.” ⁱ

I do not design to repeat from *Severus* the Miracles which St. *Martin* did: perhaps if I did, I should be thought to turn into Ridicule, what he relates with great Seriousness. I refer therefore the Reader to him; but what is here to be considered is, That since we have so *faithful* an Account given of a great Number of Miracles performed by so good, and so *holy* a Man, as *Martin* is said to have been, by an *Eye-witness*, by ^k “ so “ *learned* and *wise* a Man” as *Severus*, as *Austin* calls him; ^l “ a Man famous, as “ well

^h Neque enim hoc Martinus indiget, ut mendaciis adferatur. c. 5.

ⁱ Sed tamen totius sermonis fidem apud te, Christe, depromimus, nos nec alia dixisse, neque alia dicturos, quam quæ aut IPSI VIDIMUS, aut quæ manifestis auctoribus, vel plerumque ipso referente, cognovimus. Cæterum etsi dialogi speciem—adsumpsimus, nos pie præstare profiteamur historię veritatem. *Ibid.* c. 5.

^k Vir doctrina & sapientia pollens. *Augustinus.*

^l Vir genere & litteris pollens. *Gennadius.*

“ well for his Family, as his Learning;” so *Gennadius* : “^m Holy, learned, eloquent;” so *Sigonius*. Oneⁿ “ wise, upright, blessed, courageous, rich in the Lord,” as *Paulinus* calls him; and in another place he pronounces him “^o blessed of the Lord, who in so worthy Language and just Affection had wrote the History of so great a Priest, and so notorious a Confessor:”—Since we have so faithful an Account, I say, by so great a Man, one cannot but own that he was competently informed of what he relates; and he appears to have, throughout his History, as honest a Disposition to speak the *Truth*, and the *whole Truth*, and nothing but the Truth, as one would desire. And yet very few, if any, except such as pay a Regard to the *Age* in which the Saint lived, credit the Stories *Severus* has told of his intimate Friend and Acquaintance. It must be acknowledged, that this Historian was charged with *romancing* not a little, in relation to St. *Martin*, in his own Times; and as he had heard of this Reproach, he vindicates himself, or attempts to do so, from the Charge of *telling Lies* on his behalf: But still it may be justly questioned, whether

E he

^m Sanctus, doctus, — — — *Sigonius*. Vid. Testimonies prefixed to the *Leipsc* Edition of *Severus*.

ⁿ Sapiens — rectus — beatus — fortis — dives in Domino. *Paulinus* Epist. i.

^o Benedictus igitur tu homo Domino, qui tanti sacerdotis & manifestissimi confessoris historiam, tam digno sermone quam justo affectu percensuisti. *Paulinus* Epist. v. ad *Severum*.

he has quite cleared himself from the Imputation he then laboured under ; or whether his Folly and Weakness be not as great as his Wisdom and Learning.

What then are we to do in such Cases as these, where honest Men, *Eye-witnesses*, affirm with so much Assurance Facts, that are so extraordinary, as all St. *Martin's* Miracles are? They are told indeed by one, that *saw* much of what he relates: But yet, several of them, at least, are of such a nature, that no one will think the Consequence good, that because God is able to produce such or such Events, that therefore he did do so. Facts *possible* to be done by God, must be considered in all their Circumstances: And if some are related, which bear about them evident Marks of *Improbability*, one cannot but *suspect*, or *suspend* one's Judgment, notwithstanding the Confidence with which they are told, unless there be some Circumstances more than *common Testimony*, which may lead one to give Credit to the Relation.

We have a remarkable Miracle, told at large by no less Authority than the Church of *Smyrna*, which happened in the Age after the Death of the Last of the Apostles: I mean That which happened at the Burning of that Apostolic Teacher *Polycarp*, who, as the *Chronicon Alexandrinum* tells us, was p “ *burnt*
“ *alive*

p Ἐκείν ζῶν — ἔτι καὶ ἀπεκαλύετο αὐτῷ, τελευτῶν αὐτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ὁμῶρον. Chron. Alexand. p. 604. Edit. Raderi.

“ *alive* — for so it was *revealed* unto him,
 “ that being *burnt alive*, he should be made
 “ perfect.” What this *Revelation* was, appears
 as well from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, as
 from the Extracts that were made of it by
Eusebius, and from later Historians. When
 the Martyr was ^q “ at Prayers, three days be-
 “ fore he was apprehended, he had, or he
 “ was in, a Vision; and he saw his Pillow,
 “ or what was laid under his Head, all *on*
 “ Fire. Turning himself to Those that were
 “ with him, he said *prophetically*, I must be
 “ burnt alive.” *Eusebius* tells the Story a
 little differently, adding some Circumstances,
e. g. that it was in the ^r *Night time*: That he
 “ saw what was under his Head, not only
 “ burning, but quite consumed by the Fire:”
 That, “ being waked out of his Sleep, he
 “ presently interpreted the Vision, almost
 “ foretelling what was to come, and openly
 “ declaring to those with him, That he must
 “ by Fire change his Life for the sake of
 “ Christ.” Soon after *Polycarp* was seized,
 and condemned to the Flames; and when he

E 2

was

^q Καὶ προσέχόμενος ἐν ὀπτασίᾳ γέγονε, πρὸ τριῶν ἡμερῶν
 τὸ συλληθῆναι αὐτὸν· καὶ εἶδεν προσκεφάλαιον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ πυρὸς
 κατακαύμενον· καὶ εὐλαβὴς εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς συνόντας αὐτῷ προσ-
 φητικῶς, Δεῖ με ζῶντα κατακαυθῆναι. Martyr. Polycarpi.

^r Νύκτωρ ἰδεῖν τὸ ὑπὸ κεφαλῆς εἶδος ἀδρόαυς ἕως ὑπὸ
 πυρὸς φλεχθῆναι δεδαπανῆσθαι, ἔξυπνον δὲ ὅτι τὰ πρὶν γινόμενον,
 εὐδὲς ὑπερμυθεῖσαι τοῖς παρῶν τὸ φανέν, μονοεχὲς τὸ μέλλον
 προσεσπίσαντα, σαφῶς τε ἀνειπόντα τοῖς ἀμὲν αὐτὸν, ὅτι δεῖ
 αὐτὸν διὰ χριστὸν πνεῖ τὴν ζῶντα μεταλλάξαι. Euseb. Hist. Eccl.
 lib. iv. c. 15.

was on the Pile at Prayer, he expresses himself in full hopes, that he should be that day accepted by God, "as a well-pleasing Sacrifice, as he had foreordained it, and manifested it before-hand, and fulfilled it." I must not omit, that before this there was a *Voice from Heaven*, that said to him, "Be of good Courage, Polycarp, and behave like a Man." And so indeed the good old Man seems to have done.

What now was the Event of this *Prophetic Vision*? or what was it that was "manifested before-hand?" Was the old Man burnt alive, as he said he should be? No: "The Fire, forming a sort of Arch, or like the Sail of a Ship filled with Wind, surrounded, as with a Wall, the Body of the Martyr; and he was in it, not like Flesh burning, but as Bread baking, or as Gold and Silver in a Furnace melting and purifying by Fire." If these Comparisons convey any Ideas to us, the Place where the Martyr was, was very hot, and would naturally have put an end to his Life; and had it done so, his *Prophecy* had been fulfilled. But, as if
it

Ἐν θυσίᾳ πίονι καὶ προσδεκτῇ, καὶ ὡς θρηπίδας καὶ προσφάνεως, καὶ ἐπλήρωσας. Martyr. Polycarp. Euseb. ibid.

Τὸ πῦρ καμίνος οἶδ' οὖν ποιῆσαν ὥσπερ ὁδοὶ πλοῖα ὑπὸ πνεύματι πληρωμένα, κύκλῳ περικτείνουσι τὸ σῶμα τῷ μαρτυροῦ καὶ ἦν μέσον, ὥς ὡς σάβη καίομένη, ἀλλ' ὥς ἄρτι ὁπώμενον, ἢ ὡς χρυσὸς καὶ ἀργυρὸς ἐν καμίνῳ πυρέμενον. Mart. Polycarp.

it had been on purpose to shame all such as *pretended* to that heavenly Gift without having it, or for whatever other Reason, the “ u Fire not being able to consume his Body,” the Executioner was ordered to *stab* him ; and instantly so much Blood issued from him, as put out the Fire. Thus died this “ *Apostolical* and *Prophetic* Teacher ; w “ *for every* “ *Word* that he spoke has been fulfilled, or “ will be fulfilled.”

It is somewhat strange, that the Church of *Smyrna* should treat *Polycarp* all along as a *Prophet* ; and should tell the Vision and the Interpretation of it ; and then immediately should give an Account of his Death in Terms directly contrary to it. *He prophesied*, that he was to be *burnt alive* ; and *They* tell us, that the Fire *could not*, did not, *burn him* at all. Nay, *They* observe (tho' not particularly of Him) that the x “ Fire used by the inhuman Torturers of the Martyrs was even *cold* “ to them.” It does not seem to have been so to *Polycarp*, if one may guess from the Comparisons made use of to explain this matter. However, the Centurion, who was at the Execution of the Martyr, perceiving some Contest about his *Body*, the Christians, y “ *be-* “ *ing*

u Μὴ δυνάμενον αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα ὑπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς καταναηθῆναι. Ibid.

w Πᾶν ὃ ῥῆμα ὁ ἀφῆκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐτελεσθήναι, καὶ τελειωθήναι. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

x Τὸ πῦρ ἦν αὐτοῖς ψυχρὸν τὸ τῶν ἀπληθῶν βασανιστῶν. Ibid.

y Μελλόντων ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ πυρὶ λαμβάνειν αὐτὸν. Ibid.

“ ing willing to have taken it out of the *Fire*,” (tho’ the *Fire* was extinguished by the Martyr’s Blood) the Centurion, I say, ² “ putting him in the middle of the Fire, burnt him,” after he was *dead*. So that in fact he was not *burnt alive*, but when he was *dead*; directly contrary to his Prophecy.

I enter not into the Story of the *Dove* flying out of His Body; which, whether it was omitted by *Eusebius*, or added since his Time; or whether it be a Corruption of ἀπ’ ἀεισέρεα, which I am more inclined to, than any other Emendation I have met with—I enter not into this, nor into that ² “ *prodigious Fragran-*
“ *cy*,” which his Body within the Arch of Fire emitted. The Bodies of dying and dead Saints do usually, it seems, emit very *fragrant Smells*, as all the Writers of the Lives of Saints assure us. Is there not, upon the whole, ground to *doubt*, or *suspect* a Story, where one sees there has been tampering? That God could preserve the Body of *Poly-*
carp from the Flames, is no doubt *possible*. But that God should *reveal* it to him, that He should be “ *burnt alive*,” and then should *preserve* him from the Fire, is not easily to be believed. That the *Church* of *Smyrna* should believe, and call him a *Prophet*, or
say

² Θείς αὐτὸν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ πυρὸς ἔκαυσεν. Ibid.

² Καὶ γὰρ ἐνωδίας ποσά τις ἀντελαβόμεθα, ὡς λίαν αὐτὸς πνέοντες, ἢ ἄλλοι πνέοντες τῶν πνέοντων ἀρωμάτων. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 15.

say that "every Word he spoke was fulfilled," in Contradiction to Fact, is ground for Jealousy of *Their Veracity*. The very Account of the *burning* him *after his Death*, is at best very inaccurately told. And the saying that *Fire* was *cold* to the Martyrs, will make a Man *suspicious*, that they were not averse to exaggerate Matters, or to talk in very strong Figures. However, if any one imagines the Relation made by the Church of *Smyrna* on this occasion to be just and faithful, he has a Right to *believe* it: But should another think, that their Relation has suffered in going thro' the Hands of Transcribers; or that the *Manner* in which these Papers were discovered by the *Ghost* of *Polycarp*, after they had been lost some time; or that the Narration itself has some Marks of *Improbability*; he has a Right to suspend his Assent, till he can meet with further Information, just as he does by other historical Facts, that are *incredible* in their own nature, and are attended with no Circumstance, from whence one can argue the *Probability* of a miraculous Interposition.

What then? Will you refuse Assent to so good, so pious, so honest Vouchers? Can the Authority of *Eye-witnesses* be called in question? Or can the *Power* of God, when it is attested by such Spectators of it, be a matter of Doubt?

The *Power* of God is not the point in question, but the *Veracity* of *Witnesses*; and
if

if the Circumstances of their Narrations are such, as make the thing *incredible* in itself, every one has a right to *doubt* of, or to reject such a Story, with—*Sit fides penes authorem*. Believe the Story, if you think proper; but do not condemn others, who think they have reason to doubt. For what is the great Good, if you receive such a Story; or what is the great Harm, if you reject it?

Again; There is an Account of a Miracle in the Church of our *Saviour's Ascension*^b, That “that Place, from which our Lord was
“ taken up in a Cloud, and ascended into
“ Heaven, was so *consecrated* by his *divine*
“ *Footsteps* upon it, that it would never suf-
“ fer it be *covered* with Marble, or any other
“ Pavement whatever; the Ground itself *re-*
“ *jecting*, and throwing off every thing, by
“ which any one attempted to adorn it.” No doubt this is possible, if one considers the mere *Power* of God; but yet the Credibility of the Fact depends upon the mere Authority of the Vouchers, and will hardly be believed, however it is attested by no less a Man than *Paulinus*; who seems to have credited the thing, tho’ he relates it only as *reported*.

It

^b Mirum vero inter hæc, quod in Basilica Ascensionis, locus ille tantum, de quo in nube susceptus ascendit—ita sacra- tus divinis vestigiis *dicitur*, ut nunquam tegi marmore, aut paviri receperit, semper excussis, solo respuente, quæ manus adornandi studio tentaverit apponere. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

It is very hard for any one to call in question a good Man's Veracity, when he professes to relate what he himself had SEEN; yet Stories so vouched are so incredible sometimes, that the solemnest Affeверations pass for no Evidence. I will not insist on what the Author, who personated St. *Austin*, tells us, c "That after he was Bishop of *Hippo*, he, " with other Servants of Christ, went to " preach the Gospel to the *Ethiopians*, and " there he saw Men and Women *without* " *Heads*, and that their *Eyes* were in their " *Breasts*. In the lower Parts of *Ethiopia*, " we saw Men, says he, with *one Eye* only, and That in their *Foreheads*." Had he said, that he saw the People, whom *Pliny* or *Mela* describe in that manner, it might have been a little more tolerable. But let him affirm ever so strongly upon his *Eye-sight* such Men and Women; yet, I imagine, it will meet with but small Reception amongst those, who are not superstitious, or credulous.

So when *Paulinus* gives us a remarkable Story of what he did himself in virtue of a *Piece of the Cross* of Christ, it is so circumstanced, as to render the Fact of *dubious Credit*.

F

dit.

c Ecce ego jam Hipponensis Episcopus eram, & cum quibusdam servis Christi ad Æthiopiam perrexi, ut eis Sanctum Christi Evangelium prædicarem; & VIDIMUS ibi multos homines ac mulieres capita non habentes, sed oculos grossos fixos in corpore.—VIDIMUS & in inferioribus partibus Æthiopiæ homines unum oculum tantum in fronte habentes. *August. ad Fratres in Eremo*, p. 135. Edit. *Basilæ* 1569.

dit. *John*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, had sent him a little Bit of that sacred Wood; and *Paulinus* communicated to *Severus* a Piece of his Piece, that he had receiv'd from *Jerusalem*. With it *Paulinus* sent a large Account how the Cross was miraculously discovered, and assures him of that strange Property of that Wood; ^d " cut off as many Pieces as you
 " will of it, yet it never is lessened, but con-
 " tinues the same, as if it never had been
 " touched." The thing here to be observed is, that Credit is not always given, even where there should seem to be the greatest Evidence of Testimony. *Paulinus* himself was not only an *Eye-witness*, but an *Actor*, in an Affair, of which he sends his Friend word.
 " A Fire raging, and burning down a
 " House, the People got *Water*, and pour'd
 " it on the Flames, in hopes of quenching
 " them: But, instead of succeeding by means
 " of *Water*, the Fire burnt the fiercer for it.
 " Upon this, *Paulinus* taking the precious
 " Relique of the *Holy Cross*, he with That
 " instantly put out the Fire."

— — — — — *Omnem*

Vicerat Ignis aquam; nos Ligno extinximus Ignem.
Quamque Aqua non poterat, vicit brevis astula flam-
mam. Natal. 10.

His

^d Innumeris pœne quotidie hominum votis lignum suum commodans, detrimenta non sentiret, & quasi intacta permaneret. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

His being not only an *Eye-witness*, but an *Agent*, in this Case, does not satisfy any one, that That little Piece of the Cross extinguished the Flames, that *Water* could not; but there remains upon the Mind some sort of *Doubt*; and few will assent to this Fact in the same manner as they do to *Paulinus's* being Bishop of *Nola*.

What is usually said in behalf of the Miracles done in the Ages of the Best Authority, since the Apostolic Times, is, that They are related by Men of Piety, of Abilities, and Integrity. Let this have all the Weight it deserves: But when a Fact is such, as we never saw, nor is it possible for any Man by his ordinary Powers to do, the common way of Reasoning is, first to try it by *Experience*; and if we find no Agreement to That, then to see for a Reason, or to make a Judgment upon Circumstances, from whence the *Probability* of such Miracle may appear. Let us therefore consider the general Rules, by which we determine the *Probability* of Facts.

1. If we perceive a thing *impossible* in its Nature, no Testimony, no Authority whatever is sufficient to make it be believed to be really done; and whatever it is that is done, will always be imputed to Art or Trick. When the People of *Egnatia* pretended, that they could at their Temple *burn* and consume *Incense without Fire*; it was easy to perceive a

Trick, tho' perhaps a Man might not be able to tell how it was performed.

—— ——— *Gnatia lymphis*
Iratis extructa dedit risusque Jocosque;
Dum flammâ sine thura liquefcere limine sacro
Persuadere cupit. Credat Judæus Apella,
Non ego. ——— HORAT. Sat, v.

2. If a Thing be *possible*, and yet we find in Experience, that it never, or *seldom* happens; or that we ourselves, or others, have never, or scarce ever heard, or found it to happen, we give our Assent to Witnesses, who assert such a thing, with *great Difficulty*. There is no Impossibility in the nature of things, but that there may be found out what goes by the Name of the *Philosopher's Stone*: but yet as it may be questioned, whether ever any one has been able to discover this grand Secret; tho' it has been often pretended to (nay, there are those who tell us, *who* have been in Possession of it ever since its first Invention by *Adam*, down quite to the last Century) — as it may be questioned, I say, whether ever any one has been able to discover this grand Secret; no wise Man will readily give his Assent to any one, who pretends to have found it out. It is *possible*, that there may be a Lump of *Gold*, or a *Diamond*, as big as an House, or a Mountain; yet should any one assert, that he has *seen* such a
Mass,

Mafs, he would not easily gain Credit to his Affertion.

3. If a Fact be extraordinary, and what does not come within the Verge of our Experience, or that of others, who are contemporary with us; yet if we are able to see a *good Reason*, why fuch a *Fact* fhould be done, we may give good Credit to it. Or, if an extraordinary Fact has been done, of the Truth of which we are convinced; we may judge a *like Fact* to be *probable*, if a *like Reason* appears. But if a *like Fact* be reported, and a *like Reason* does not appear, then we may conclude the Fact to be *improbable*, and we ought not to give any Credit to it.

Thus, in order to prove himfelf to be *The Chrift*, our Saviour reftored Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame; and we fee a very good Reason for fuch extraordinary Facts, or for an immediate Interpofition of Providence on that account. But fhould a Relation be made now of fuch Miracles performed before any *Image*, or by any *Relique*, and no Reason appears, why fuch Miracle is performed; we may doubt, or refufe Credit to it, however it may be pretended to be attested.

4. It does not hence follow, that God never does interpoſe in a Manner extraordinary, where we perhaps cannot fee the Reason of his Interpofition: But the *Probability* of his not interpoſing in fuch manner is fuch, that the Credit of Witneſſes muſt be able to counterbalance

terbalance the *Improbability* of such his Interposition, before we can assent to it.

These are general Rules of judging concerning the Credibility of *extraordinary* things that happen: for as to *common* Cases, we judge from what we find has happened within our own Experience, or that of others; and no great difficulty here occurs. But then we must form a Judgment about the Credibility of *Persons*, as well as *Things*, in order not to be deceived. And here,

A Witness of any Fact must have Opportunity of *examining* it: He must be *faithful* in relating it: He must not be biassed by *Interest*, or *Party*: He must not be *credulous*: He must have Abilities to search out the Truth. Again; If a Man be an *Eye-witness* of any Fact, and has the Qualities just now mentioned, he deserves the *first* degree of Credit. If a Person *relates*, what an Eye-witness tells him, he has a *lesser* degree of Credit due to him. He still has a *lower* degree, who relates only what *They* say, to whom Eye-witnesses have made a Report. And as for those, who collect from others what they have said, and thus compile a History of Facts, their Credit depends upon their Judgment in rejecting, or relating, what has appeared to them to be True or False.

There is another Rule, of great Importance to form our Notions of *Credibility*; and that is, if *Enemies*, as well as *Friends*, concur

cut in relating the same Fact. In this Case there arises a degree of *Probability*, which makes a Relation of any Fact very credible: For *Enemies* would certainly *deny*, (if they had any ground for Denial) whatever is reported to their Prejudice. If therefore an *Enemy* to the Gospel should admit the Facts related in the Gospel, or should attempt to account for them by *Magic Arts*, or by any other Solution—This would be a direct Testimony in behalf of such Facts, and ought to have the greatest Regard paid to it. The Testimony therefore of the *Fathers*, (to add this by the by) is not the *only* Support of the Credit of the *Evangelists*; but we have the *unanimous Consent* of the *Enemies* of the Gospel, as well as of its *Friends*. Supposing therefore that the *Fathers* could be proved to be *weak* and *injudicious* Men, as *credulous* in certain Points, as those who are no Friends to them, or to their Writings, would represent them; yet this is not sufficient to invalidate their Testimonies to the Scriptures, since the *Enemies* to the Gospels acknowledge, that they were wrote by the *Authors*, whose Names they bear, and acknowledge the *miraculous* Facts by their Attempts to *account* for them. But to this Point more will be said under the other Question to be considered hereafter.

The general Rules of Probability being thus laid down, must *all* of them, or *how many*, or *which* of them, be applied to make
an

an *extraordinary* Event appear credible? No doubt, if *many* of these Circumstances concur, the *Probability* may rise to such an Height, as to amount to Conviction. But if it should happen, that the Credibility of *Persons* should be to be weighed against the Credibility of *Things*, there may remain grounds for *Doubt*, and *Suspicion*; and Assent may be withheld without any just Charge of Scepticism.

Let us now suppose a Fact to be related, improbable in itself, because we have never found in our own Experience, or in that of others, any similar Instance; nor have ever heard or seen any Man able to do, what is said to be done: — A *Suspicion* presently arises, and lies against the Man who relates it, however *faithful* the Relator may be, and even *credible* in all other Instances. Nor will his Ability, or supposed Honesty, or his being even an *Eye-witness*, totally remove the *Jealousy* of Fraud, or Imposition, or Trick; because the *Improbability* of the *Thing* outweighs any Assurance that we can have of *Personal Qualities*. It is not therefore unusual for Men to be guilty of a double Mistake in arguing on this Head: They *first* consider only the Credibility of *Persons*; and if they find them *able* and *honest*, they do not consider the Incredibility of the *Thing*: And then, what is as usual, they reason from the Testimonies, *e. g.* of *Livy*, or *Tully*, or *Cæsar*,

far, in a pure *credible* Matter, to the Case of the Testimony of others, in Matters in their own nature *incredible*. What I mean is this: They argue, that we have *moral Evidence* for the Truth of the Facts related by *Livy* or *Cæsar*; and we believe them: And then they add, we have the same *moral Evidence* for the Facts related by *St. Matthew*, or *St. John*. But they seem not once to take it into their Thoughts, that every body makes a difference in the same Historian, betwixt what he relates as a *common, natural*, Fact, which is like to what we see, or hear frequently from others; and what is related as *miraculous*, to which we see nothing similar. Accordingly Men often reject, what is related of this kind, as *fabulous*, and *incredible*, how much deference soever they may pay to an Author in other Matters.

LIVY gives us an Account of the Irruption of the *Gauls* into *Italy* under *Brennus*, and of their taking and sacking *Rome*, and of their total Defeat by *Camillus*. He tells us too of *Hannibal's* surprising March and Passage over the *Alps*, and his beating the *Romans* in several Engagements; and at last, how *Fabius*, by Delays and cautious Wariness, restored the *Roman Affairs*. No body calls in question the Truth of these several Facts. But whether or no, “^f before the *Gallic War* began, there
G “ was

^f Expiandæ etiam vocis nocturnæ, quæ nuntia cladis ante bellum Gallicum audita neglectaque, mentio illata. Liv. l. x,

“ was a *Voice heard in the Night*, that foretold
 “ the Destruction which the *Gauls* made,”
 may justly be *doubted*: nor will the Circum-
 stance of their building an Altar, or a Temple,
 to *Æ Aius Locutius* on that Occasion, verify
 the Truth of the Fact, that *Aius Locutius*
 spoke, or that any one heard such a Voice.
 And so when he mentions the Prodigies,
 which happened about *Hannibal's* Invasion of
Italy; or when he tells of a *Bullock's speak-*
ing, of its raining *Stones*, or *Blood* — These
 may be *suspected*, or *denied*, because they
 have no degree of Probability. If then it be
 asked, Why is *Livy* credited in one Part of
 his History; and in the other, whatever he
 says is *suspected*, or perhaps *rejected*? Or it is
 questioned, whether *all History*, by this
 means, is not rendered *dubious* or *uncertain*?
 Or how is it possible to distinguish Truth
 from Falshood? The Answer is, Consider the
 Nature of the thing told. What is *agreeable*
 to *Experience* you have no reason to reject,
 unless there appears some Mark of *Untruth*:
 but what is *contrary* to *Experience*, or where
 nothing similar occurs, which can make us
 think the Story to be *probable*, there we have
 no reason to admit such a Narration, unless
 there has been such Examination, as precludes
 all Doubt.

Thus,

Æ Aius ille loquens, quando cum nemo norat, aiebat, & lo-
 quebatur, & ex eo nomen invenit: posteaquam & sedem, &
 aram, & nomen invenit, obmutuit? *Cicer. de Divinat. l. 2.*

Thus, when a *Popish* Historian tells us an ordinary historical Fact, we acquiesce in, and assent to his Narration. But when the same Author asserts ever so strongly Miracles done by a *Relique*, or an *Image*, or a *Bone*, or a *Crucifix*; every Protestant instantly suspends his Assent; Doubts arise; and he feels himself not in the same State of Mind, as he is about the rest of his History. Whence does this arise, unless it be that we measure, or judge of the Truth or Falshood of such Facts, by comparing them with what we experience in ourselves, or others; and we determine from what we know to be the nature of things, being in the first place sure, that no Man can do what is beyond his Power to do; and no Effects can be produced without *sufficient* Cause; and we suspect, that no such Examination has been made, as such Cases may require or deserve.

It will be said, that when we speak of *Miracles*, we suppose an Interposition of *Providence*; and by that acknowledge a *Power sufficient* to bring about whatever is *possible*. It is true; here is *Power*: But we do not find this Power often exerted in miraculous Cases. And as it never is, that we know of, unless for Reasons equal to the Occasions, we have a Right to *doubt*, where-ever such extraordinary Interposition is pretended, if good Reason be not produced for it. It is true, that God *may* make use of what Instruments he

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pleases:

pleases: and he *may* exert even an extraordinary Power for the Reformation of wicked Men, or the Conviction of Unbelievers, or the Confirmation of virtuous and good Men in the Faith: Nor are we to confine his providential Government of the World by our narrow Views or Capacities. But if we do not ever see a miraculous Interposition, we do not assent, because God *may* produce such; but we argue from the *Improbability* of the thing, as much outweighing the Credit of the Author; and we suspect the Truth of what is not critically enquired into.

A *Bullock*, e. g. is said by *Livy* to have *spoken*, a *Horse* by *Homer*, a *Ram* by *Apollonius Rhodius*; a *Dog*, an *Elephant*, *Rivers*, *Trees*, in other Authors—Instances of which are very numerous in the *Greek* and *Latin* Writers; and particularly mention is made of *Cows speaking*. The very learned *Bochart* has collected out of *Historians*, *Poets*, and *Mythologists*, a very great number of Instances of this kind; from whence he concludes, “^h That no one would say, that *all* these are *fictional*: It is plain therefore, says he, that in this respect the Devil has shewn himself the Ape of God.” No doubt but that any, or all these, may be resolved into a Power able to produce such Effect;

^h Nemo omnia hæc commentitia dixerit. Itaque hac in parte planum est Diabolum se præstitisse Dei Simiam. *Bochart. Hieroz. l. ii. c. 4.*

fect; and Forty of them, as well as One. But yet Few will be easily persuaded of the Truth of such Facts, however related by Authors of good Credit in other Cases: nor will many come into the Solution which *Bockart* has given, unless he could have pointed out which were *fictitious*, and which were the Produce of the *Devil's* Power. Plain as this seemed to that very able and truly learned and masterly Writer, yet no degree of *Probability* appears, that the *Devil*, in any of the Instances he has quoted, *imitated* God; and it seems more *likely*, that all those Instances, collected out of Heathen Authors, are mere *Fictions*, than owing to any Interpositions of that Evil Spirit. It is the *Incredibility* of the *Facts* themselves, not of the *Power* able to produce such Facts, which makes them be denied: and it will be time enough to enquire into the *Cause*, or *Author* of these Facts, when we are sure that there were such *Facts* done.

It may perhaps be suggested, as indeed it has been, That it is not necessary to believe every *particular* miraculous Story, which occurs either among the Ancients or Moderns. But then, if Miracles are uniformly related, as done in different Ages, and different Places; and This for a long Continuance; and Historians, and other good Men, concur in the Report of such Facts; what Credit is due to such a Concurrence of Attestations? Must

we

we not look on such Witnesses as *Fools* or *Knaves*, all to concur without Contradiction, and acting as in *Concert* to propagate what is false? But let it be observed,

First, When it is thought right to give up *particular* miraculous Stories, some Test or other must be given, by which one may judge, which are the defensible ones, and which the indefensible. Are the *Popish* Miracles of any Century, since the *Sixth* or *Seventh*, to have Credit? If the Answer be in the Negative, I shall ask, Are *St. Martin's*? Are *Simeon Stylites's*? Are *Hilarion's*? Are *St. Antony's*? If These are not to be credited, tho' Historians concur without Contradiction in them; What is the Rule by which one can judge, which are to be credited, and which not? If it be *Age* alone that gives the Sanction, Care must be taken, lest any one taking a little and a little from it, should artfully take away the Authority of the whole:

————— *Caudæque Pilos ut Equinæ*
Paulatim vello, & demo unum, demo etiam unum,
Dum cadat————— HOR. Epist. l. 2. Ep. 1.

Secondly, Admitting it to be true, that Men concur in Attestations of miraculous Facts; yet it is hard to represent them *all* as *Fools* or *Knaves*, even supposing the Facts to be false. They may possibly have examined Witnesses, who have been positive and clear;
and

and they may have reported according to the Evidence before them. They may have entertained too good an Opinion of Those they credited ; or they may have taken for granted, what they did not examine, as is common enough in other Cases. Or, lastly, They may have acted upon Prejudices, and imagined a Continuance of real Powers, in opposition to the supposed Powers of Magic, or any such Illusion.

But whether one can account for the Conduct, or for particular Actions of Men, is not very material. Popish Miracles have been pretended in *every* Age ; in Variety of Places ; for many Centuries together before the Reformation : And since the Reformation, we have the Continuance of them related by a great many Authors. And tho' some particular ones have been discovered to be false, yet still others are reported by Men of Learning and Abilities ; and some are produced and insisted on as Standard ones, indisputable, worked constantly by Providence, in order to the Conversion of *Infidels* and *Heretics*. Call the Vouchers of These, if you please, *Fools* or *Knaves* : The *Concurrence of Attestations* continues to this Day ; and whatever fully accounts for this Concurrence now, may possibly help us to account for the like Concurrence in Times past.

Where-ever we can arrive at what we think Evidence about any thing's being done,
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we cannot but believe it to *Be*. Supposing one were to *see* a dead Man raised to Life, or a *sick* Man cured by a *Word*, or a Lame one by a *Touch*, one could not doubt of what one *saw*: and supposing it to be all an Imposture artfully carried on, yet one could not help believing it to be what it appeared to be, and accordingly it would be treated. But then there are infinite Cases, where we are wont to add Conjectures of our own to what we *think* we see; and we determine, as we think them most *likely*: and here we may easily mistake. We are too apt at all times to make hasty Inferences from narrow Views; and accordingly we impute to the *Devil*, to *Angels*, to *Saints*, to *Images*, to *Reliques*, certain Facts, the *Causes* of which we are utter Strangers too. This is plainly owing to our Ignorance, and to strong Imagination, imputing to a certain determinate Cause, what we have no Reason or Grounds for. The *Popish* Writers, (infinitely worse than *Heathens* in this respect) attest many Miracles, as done by a certain *Image*; and they name the Persons cured, the Place where the Cure was done, the Length of Time the Person had been afflicted, the Day when he was relieved from his Disorder, or totally cured; and they name every Circumstance so minutely, and with such Precision, that if one were to look no farther, one could not deny Assent to what they report. But whether these miraculous
Cures,

Cures, supposing them done, are owing to a *Saint*, or an *Image*, to a *Relique*, or to any other particular assigned Cause, may be questioned. I do not mention such a credulous, superstitious silly Man, as was the famous *Lipsius*, notwithstanding all his Learning and great Abilities: But one may cite Authors of much better Reputation, who have testified at large, upon their own Knowledge, i^e “ Cures of Arms, the Use of which
 “ had been lost for a dozen Years through ill
 “ letting of Blood; Cures of *Hectic Fevers*
 “ of long Continuance; of Lameness of
 “ fourteen Years standing; of Falling Sick-
 “ ness, Rheumatisms, Loss of Sight of ma-
 “ ny Years Continuance, Fainting Fits,” and a Variety of other Disorders, removed by Prayers before certain *Images* of the Blessed Virgin; and therefore, as they say, done by them. The Truth of these miraculous Cures is largely attested by no less Persons than Bishops, Chancellors of *France*, and Men of the greatest Honour and Dignity in that Kingdom; and believed by them. Whence now is it, that no Protestant gives his Assent to these so *well attested* Stories? Or whence is it, that those who do believe them, (whatever the Ground or Reason of their Belief is founded on) impute such strange Effects to an Image? They argue *now*, just in the same manner as those of old did, who finding, up-
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ⁱ See L'Histoire de notre Dame du Paix.

on much digging, and removing of Rubbish, about the Place where our Saviour was said to be crucified, *Three Crosses*, which had lain buried there near *Three hundred Years*, and were not decayed; and not being able to tell, which was That on which Christ died, they presently discovered it by its imagined Virtue; for k “ when they laid a dead Carcass, first “ on one of them, and then on the other, “ Death despised the Power of the *Thieves* “ Crosses; but as soon as it was applied to “ our Lord’s Cross, a Resurrection instantly “ ensued, and the Body revived, and stood “ upright; those that were living Spectators “ trembling” at what happened. Such Facts as These should be allowed to be *examined* by *Enemies*, as well as *Friends*, and by that means freed from Doubt; for the mere Attestations of interested Parties are not sufficient to remove Suspicions, or to gain Credit to what is improbable in the nature of the thing.

I have already taken notice of that peculiar Property of *This Cross*, that “ tho’ it be cut “ often, and Pieces of it taken away by great “ Numbers of People, yet it grows again, “ and

* Nec mora, verbum factum, cadaver illatum est, deponitur, jacenti una de Crucibus admovetur, & altera: sed reorum ligna mors sprevit. Postremo, Dominicam Crucem prodit Resurrectio, & ad salutaris ligni tactum morte profuga funus excussum, & corpus erectum est, tremefactisque viventibus stetit corpus. — Ita ut crucem Christi decult, experimento resurrectionis inventa & probata Crux Christi est. *Paulin. Epist. xi. ad Severum.*

“ and is the *same Whole*, as if it had never
 “ been touched.” We should not endeavour to assign a *Cause* of this remarkable Effect, before we are sure of the *Fact*. And so it is in relation to the Cures, which are so strongly attested by zealous Catholics; the *Facts* themselves are to be ascertained, before we enquire who, or what, was the *Cause* of them. There is something in all these Cases, which makes one *doubt*, and *suspect*, and impute to *Credulity*, or *Interest*, or *private Views*, what is so extraordinary and uncommon. They, who contend for them, urge in their behalf, not only the Credibility of *Witnesses*, but that they are not unlike the Miracles recorded in Scripture, which all Parties admit. That if any of These, done before an Image of the Virgin, or at the Tomb of any Saint, are not *instantaneous* Cures, but took up some time to accomplish them; so did several of those that are related in the sacred Writings: That the same Power, which formerly wrought Miracles, still subsists, and ever will subsist: That the Power actually exerted by an *Image*, or a Piece of *Linnen*, or a *Bone*, is the Power of God exerted in what Manner, and by the Instrumentality of what Person or Thing, (how despicable or mean soever it may seem to them, who do not believe) he thinks fit to make use of: That these Facts are so fully *attested*, that a Man must be an absolute Sceptic to deny, or doubt of their

Truth. And, lastly, That the Scripture Miracles must be denied, if we refuse Assent to what is so amply *attested* by the best of Evidences.

It is true, that there is scarce any Miracle recorded in Scripture, which has not something *like* it told by even *Heathen* Writers, as well as *Popish* ones: And there have been Men of true and solid Learning, heartily disposed to do Credit to the Scriptures, who have made Collections of miraculous Facts; and have even run the Parallel betwixt the Sacred and Profane Authors, in order to explain them, or to shew their Consent. They had it in their Views to prove, that the extraordinary Facts mentioned in the Scriptures, were not more incredible than those asserted by *profane* Authors; and therefore, that the One should find easy Admission with Infidels, as well as the Other. For why is not a Miracle recorded by a *Jew*, as credible as one recorded by a *Heathen*?

But though this may be sufficient in certain Cases, and the End of some Arguments may be served by it; and tho' the modern Miracles may be *like* the scriptural ones in many Circumstances; yet That is by no means an Evidence of Truth. For Forgeries must be like Originals, or else they could never pass in the World. The material Point is, 1st, What Weight ought to be allowed to Testimony in Cases of miraculous Reports? And, 2dly, When

When Miracles are related by different Writers, *e. g.* by *Sulpitius Severus*, and by a *Sacred Writer*; why is the one defended, at the same time that the other is rejected? Why should not Both be condemned as fictitious, or Both be admitted as True Facts, since Both depend upon Evidence to us, *at this Distance*, well vouched by the best Human Authority? Accordingly the Papists plead the Force of Human Authority, and the nature of *Eye-sight* Witnesses, for the Miracles they relate. And indeed so do the People of the *Fifth*, and those of the *Sixth* Century; and all that have lived from those Days to the present Times have produced Vouchers, who would in *ordinary Cases* be deemed good Evidence. Why then is their Testimony, in Cases of Miracles, rejected without much Hesitation? Or will it not follow, that the Miracles, recorded in the Sacred Books, ought to be rejected as much, as other Miracles said to be worked by one body or other, since they depend upon the Authority of *Eye-sight* Witnesses?

This is not the Place to enter into this Point: And whether it be true, that the Miracles of the Gospel stand only upon the same Foundation that other Miracles do, will be shewn hereafter.

There is another Case, which must not be passed over in silence. We may easily suppose it possible to have a *Difference* in the Narration of the same Fact: That One may relate it so, as to make it all *miraculous*; and

Another may speak of it in such a manner, as not to imply *any Miracle* at all. Which Account then ought we to give the Preference to? Or what are we believe? Or how are we to assent? *E. g.* The Emperor *Justinian* tells us, ^l “That he himself *saw* very venerable
“ Men, who, having had their Tongues cut
“ out by the Roots, *spoke* in a *miserable man-*
“ *ner* what they had suffered.” *Victor Vi-*
tenfis, relating the same Fact, tells us, ^m “They
“ spoke just as well as they spoke before” this Accident happened to them. And *Pro-*
copius assures us, that these Confessors were in Being at *Constantinople* in his Time, (that is, between 40 and 50 Years after they endured what they underwent) and ἐχρῶντο ἀκρά-
φναι τῇ φωνῇ, had “ *an articulate distinct Voice*,”
“ nor felt any harm from this Affliction:”
ἐδ’ ὁπωσίεν ταύτης δὴ τῆς τιμωρίας ἐπα-
ιδανόμην. *Procop.* lib. i. cap. 8. And so *Victor* observes of some other great Sufferers in *Africa*, that ⁿ “they had no *Scars* or
“ *Bruises* appearing in them, tho’ they were
“ *burnt with red hot Irons*, tore with Hooks,
“ and racked.” The Emperor is certainly a good Voucher for the *miserable Manner* in which those unhappy People spoke. But as
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^l *Vidimus venerabiles viros, qui, abscissis radicitus linguis, pœnas suas miserabiliter loquebantur. Cod. l. i. Tit. 27.*

^m *Ita locuti sunt & loquuntur, quomodo ante loquebantur. Vict. Vitenfis, l. iii.*

ⁿ *Nulli livores, nulla pœnarum vestigia in eis penitus videbantur—laminis ignitis adusti—ungulis exarati—cruciatibus torti. Victor. ibid.*

he does not mention the *Articulenefs* of their speaking, he seems to be a much more credible Witness, than those who tell us of the *Distinctness of the Speech* of these Confessors. For that was such a Circumstance, that he could not but have taken notice of it, had he *seen* or *heard* such Objects speaking in such a manner. When therefore we are sent from *Africa* ° to *Constantinople*, as we are by *Victor Vitenfis*, for the Truth of this miraculous speaking; and we find the Emperor attesting upon his *Eye-sight*, that these Confessors only *spoke miserably*, or in a *miserable manner*; it is more probable that *his* Testimony is true, than is that of others, who say that they spoke *articulately*. For in two different Relations of the same Fact, Probability will always be on the Side of Reason and Experience, rather than on the side of Miracle.

I am not insensible, that to reconcile the Emperor and others, some are willing to change the word *miserabiliter* into *mirabiliter*: and then indeed *Justinian* and *Procopius*, &c. will perfectly agree. But in all the Editions I have seen of the *Code*, (except that of *Ruffardus*) the constant Reading is, *miserabiliter*; and whence *Ruffardus* had the other Word, or whether it was his own Correction put by him into the Margin, I know not.

° Sed si quis incredulus esse voluerit, pergat nunc Constantinopolim, & ibi reperiet unum de illis, subdiaconum Reparatum, sermones politos sine ulla offensione loquentem.

not. It is certain, that *Gothofred* takes no notice of any such various Reading. But to return.

I grant, that Human Authority is, in some Cases, deemed of that Validity, as to be indisputable. And as such, *Calculations* have been made, and its Credibility *computed*; and moral Certainty, as well when at its Heighth, as when incomplete, hath been reduced to *Numbers*. It must be owned to have been ingenious and amusing enough to make such Calculations; and if one takes for granted the *Data*, upon which the Computation is founded, there is a sort of Proportion, which cannot be denied. But the Evil is, that a Man is never the more knowing in the real Nature of *Human Testimony* by such Computations, whatever he may be in *Numbers*; because, if the degrees of Probability are either not known, or are equal to nothing, or are not in the Proportions given; all Reasoning grounded upon uncertain Principles must be of no use, and must leave a Man in as great Uncertainty as ever. Now I apprehend, that it is not in any one's Power so with Certainty to fix Human Testimony, as to be sure of its *Equality* to a given *Number*, or to make the one exactly equal to the other. And in course you cannot tell the exact Proportions of *Co-attestations*, unless you previously *suppose*, what may, or may not be true, the exact Ratio of Testimony to Number. But let us suppose, that
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this may be done in *common* Cafes; yet what is the Ratio to a fixed Number, when Calculations are applied to what is *incredible*, or at best *improbable*, as not founded on any Experience? Should one instance in *Procopius*, who tells us, That the Men, whose Tongues were cut out by the Roots in *Hunmeric's* Reign, spoke *distinctly* and *articulately* — What is *his* Testimony to be reckoned as equal to? Is it to the Number *One*, or $\frac{1}{2}$, or $\frac{1}{4}$, or to any Number bigger or lesser than what I have named? All Miracles are Acts of extraordinary Power; and every Man that relates them, relates what not one Man in many Millions ever *saw*; and what has never happened, so far as appears, in many hundreds of Years: And when, I say, not one Man in many Millions, I might have said, a great many more, and have been within the Truth. The Rarity of all such Events has been, or easily *may* be, the reason of counterfeiting, imposing, cheating, deluding. Now, what Computation of Testimony is applicable, or possible in such Cafes? Or can any one suppose such very *precarious Probability* equal to a certain *fixt Number*? Or if Men will suppose it, will any practical Knowledge arise from it? Certainly, none.

Let us now admit, that the *Popish* Miracles are similar in many Instances to those of the Scriptures; that a great many too of the *Heathen* Wonders are like, and may be compared

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with those recorded in the Bible—still, I say, the Grounds, upon which they stand, are not the same. Human Testimony itself, when it concerns common *ordinary* Cases, and when it relates to *miraculous* ones, is not equally readily admitted as Truth. Every one feels a difference, when an Author gives an Account of a common Historical Fact, and when he tells us, that a *Cow spoke, and said, 'p Rome, beware of thyself.*

What that Difference is, may appear plain enough from what has been said. Only it may be proper to observe, that even *extraordinary* Events, brought about by Providence in an *ordinary* Way, are not liable to *Doubts* and *Suspensions*, as those Acts are, that are above the Power of ordinary Human Agency. That a King should go on and conquer, and over-run almost the known World, as *Alexander* did, is a surprising Event, and what has not happened perhaps above *Once* in Two Thousand Years. And yet, because we can easily conceive how this *might* happen, no one doubts of the Fact, or of the Veracity of the Historians who relate it. So that the mere *Unusualness* of a Fact, if it be agreeable to the Laws of Nature, and what we conceive possible, is no Objection to its Truth, or to the Credibility of the Relators. But if it be a thing *preternatural*, and what we know to be *beyond* the Power of Man to do, we then

then have a Right not to trust to bare *common Evidence*, but may require something more to render it *credible*.

Thus have I considered the First Point, *viz.* What are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, in general, is founded: And have shewn, that Human Testimony, how much soever it is valued in *common Cases*, has not an equal deference paid to it in *miraculous* ones. What then, you will say, must become of the Miracles of Christ, and his Apostles? Or have we any thing more or better, than the Testimonies of *Eye-witnesses* for Them? Or, what are the Grounds which render *Them* credible? This is the Subject of the next Enquiry, and deserves a particular Attention.

QUESTION II.

Upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Gospel in particular are credible?

IT appears, by what has been said, that in order to make the Evidence for any Fact *in general credible*, there must not only be the *Relator* worthy of Credit, but the *Thing*, that he relates, must be credible. If a *Person* be a Man of the greatest Abilities, and of Integrity indisputable; yet if the *Thing* reported be in

its own nature *incredible*, either because it is impossible in itself, or because it is confirmed by no Experience of our own, or of that of others; it is in course either liable to be suspected, or perhaps to be entirely rejected. Upon what Foundation then does the Credit of our Saviour's Miracles stand; since They are improbable in their own Nature, as being Facts beyond the Power of any Mortal to do, and are similar to nothing that our common Experience teaches us? This was the Subject, which I principally had in View.

The Works, which our Saviour did, were such, as he himself appeals to, as *bearing Witness* of him. It was very usual with him, on proper Occasions, to exert a Power, which no Man else, except such as he, directly or indirectly, gave that particular Power to, could exert. He healed the Sick, and gave Sight to the Blind, and Strength to the Lamé, and cured all Sorts of Infirmities and Disorders by a *Word*, by a *Touch*, by Means that had no appearing Relation to the End; and he never failed of the Success he proposed. Nor was it only the Sick and the Lamé that were cured by him, in such an extraordinary manner; but he exerted the like Power on all Occasions, on every Subject, whenever or where-ever it pleased him to manifest it. Nor was it confined to miserable Objects alone, but the Winds and the Waters, the Dead, as well as the Living, obeyed his Voice. Of these,

these, and such like miraculous Instances, are the Four Gospels full.

That the Works of our Saviour were real miraculous Operations is evident. For tho' there are such things as lucky Incidents in Life, which no Man can account for; tho' it may happen, that Events may fall out just as a Word is spoken; or that Storms may cease, or that a sick Man may grow well, or at least better, suddenly; and that a Recovery may be no more owing to the Word spoken, than to the striking of a Clock at that Instant when the Word was spoken: Tho' surprising things have been accomplished by what is beyond our Hopes, or Conceptions, and therefore is usually called *Chance*: And, lastly, tho' it is possible to work upon the Imagination a sort of Enthusiasm, which may produce strange Effects: Yet no Chance, no Imagination, no lucky Coincidence of any kind, ever brought a Dead Man to Life, tho' they may have produced the contrary Effects, and have struck a Living Man with Death: And much less could These, or any of them, make a Dead Man revive just at a given Time, or fill Thousands of People that were hungry, and make the Fragments, that were left, to be more than the Loaves and Fishes they first sat down to.

Every Effect must have a sufficient Cause; and where-ever any thing is done above the natural Powers of any Efficient, we must recur

cur to a supernatural Efficiency. We know it not to be in the Power of Man to walk on the Surface of the Water without sinking; or should he bid another walk on the Water, he could not by a Word secure him from sinking. We know it not to be in human Power to raise a Dead Man to Life, or to cure a Sick Man at a distance, by only saying that *He liveth*. We must therefore recur to some Cause, that is equal to such Effects; or to some Power superior to That of Man, which is able to produce such Works. Now since such Facts are said to be done by our Saviour, and Others empowered by Him, this Power must be derived from some Being superior to Man.

But before I proceed to shew, that the Miracles of the Gospel are *credible* in themselves, it will be proper to enquire, what Evidence they afford of the *Truth* of our Saviour's being the Christ. And the Reason of this is, That Miracles, considered as such, are no Proof of any thing, but of *extraordinary Power*; or that the Person, who does them, is assisted by some Being superior to Man. But *Power* does not imply *Truth*; nor does it follow, that he who can exert the greatest Strength, will therefore exert the greatest Veracity. How therefore does that follow, which our Saviour says of Himself, *The same Works*

Works that I do, BEAR WITNESS of me, that the Father hath sent me?

To shew this Consequence, I must observe, that the Case of our Saviour was the Case of one foretold, and in a very remarkable Manner described, and of whom many Particulars had been mentioned in the Prophets, from the Days of *Moses* to those of *Malachi*. All these were to agree in the Person of The Christ; and were as Tests, by which he might be known with Certainty whenever he should appear. They were the Criteria by which he might be known; and without which no one could assume that Title. There was then to be a Concurrence of ALL these in any Person, who should claim to be The Christ; and such Concurrence would manifest him to be what he pretended to be. But as a *Part* only of them were fulfilled in our Saviour during his Life, and some were to be fulfilled in his Death, and several more *after* his Death, and his Death being that necessary Link in the Chain by which all was held together; — hence it was that He appealed to his *Works*, in Evidence that his Father had sent him: And hence it was, that after his Resurrection he said to his Disciples — *O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?* Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Acts xvii. 3. xxvi. 23. As if he had said — Was not *Death* and *Suffer-*

Sufferings the only Means, by which all that is said in the Prophets is to be reconciled, and made consistent? Can all the Characters of the Messiah be made to agree to any One Person, unless he goes thro' *Death*, as I have done? Accordingly our Saviour *opened their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved The Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the Third day.* Luke xxiv. 36. *Vid.* Acts, &c. Some Marks then of the Messiah were fulfilled in him; such were the *Time* of his Coming, whilst the Tribe of *Judah* continued, his Descent of the Tribe of *Judah*, the Expiration of *Daniel's* Weeks, his being of the House of *David*, his being a *Man of Sorrows*, &c. But the fulfilling of *some* of the Characters only not being a *full* Proof of his being what he pretended to be, what could an honest, fair Expectant do in the midst of so much Uncertainty? How could he actually assent to the Truth of *Jesus's* being the Christ, when several Marks of *The Christ* were not accomplished in Him?

Our Saviour plainly saw this Difficulty; and knew that there might be Objections raised against him, as not having at that time several of the Predictions concerning the *Messiah* verified in him. He was not yet, whilst he was preaching the Kingdom of God, *cut off*, nor even *brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter*.

ter. Much less did he appear in that Character of *sitting upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom to order it, and to establish it, with Judgment and Justice.* The Government was not upon his Shoulder, nor did he appear as reigning over the House of Jacob for ever, or as having a Kingdom, of which there was to be no End. There were many other particular Prophecies unaccomplished, and especially what related to the Call and coming in of the Gentiles; the casting off of the Jews, and the Destruction of their State. And therefore our Lord justly said, *Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.* Luke xii. 10. There would, when the Holy Ghost was given, appear so many Marks of the Messiah accomplished, and the Key, which would open all the seeming Inconsistences of the Messiah's Character, would then be so plain, that it would be no longer excusable to speak against the Person of our Lord; but it must be Perverseness, and affected Obstinacy, or Ignorance, not to come into a Belief of his being *The Christ*.

Let us now suppose a Person to be described under *Twenty* Marks or Characters, which all concurring in any one Man, would make him known with the utmost Certainty. Suppose too, that when He is first seen, he answers not to above *Ten* or a *Dozen* of them;

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and that in Time he possibly may answer to the rest. During this Appearance, he declares himself to be the Person described, and exerts very frequently a *supernatural Power* in Vindication of his Claim; and likewise tells, (tho' not openly, that all might understand him, but) privately to his Followers, how the Characters, not at present visible in him, would be apparent to all. — Do not the miraculous Works done by such a Person *bear Witness* to him? Or what Evidence can be stronger for the *Truth* of his Assertion, than That which he thus produced? Or say, that Ten or Twelve Men, to whom the Meaning of the Scriptures had been explained, and the Consistency of many Prophecies (plainly contrariant to one another, if not seemingly contradictory) had been made apparent. — If such a Number of Men, thus instructed, were to work frequent Miracles, in proof that the Person described by so many Marks was actually come; and were to shew, that all of them did in fact agree to Him, and that his Death and Resurrection was the very Means by which all that was said in the Law and the Prophets might be reconciled — Would not such Miracles be Evidences of the *Truth* of such Testimony?

Be it so then, that Miracles, in general, are no Arguments of any thing but *Power*; yet when any particular Miracle is applied in Attestation of a Person, to whom *many* Characters

acters belonged, and in whom *some* were already fulfilled, and others would in due course of Time be fulfilled; the Miracle proves the *Attestation* of some Being, superior to Man, to the Truth of the thing asserted. The miraculous Interposition has the additional Force of *Supernatural Authority* recommending and pressing the verbal Testimony of him, who does the Miracle. Or supposing the Revelation to be of some future Event, or of any Fact not discoverable by any human Means, the Probability of its Truth rises proportionably to the supposed Knowledge of the Revealer, manifesting himself by such external Sign. For it seems natural to conclude, that Beings superior to Man have greater and more extensive Views, and more enlarged Capacities; and may see much further into Futurity, and in course may know more than we do: And if they prove by extraordinary Evidence, that they are *present* to, and *co-operate* with any Man, the Probability will always be, that they declare the Truth.

Apply this Reasoning to the Works of Christ, which carried plain and evident Marks of a Supernatural Power. They were Arguments to prove, that He was *The Christ*, tho' He had not yet fulfilled all that the Prophets had said about him: and They were Proofs that his Father had sent him. Under these Circumstances, He delivered a Doctrine tending to improve Mankind in Virtue and Good-

ness; and he discovered many things in relation to God's Schemes of governing the World; *his Judging Mankind*, and his having *all Power committed* to him, and his *having made all things*; and many other Points, which no Powers of Reason could possibly discover. It is certain, that the Doctrines he taught were worthy of all Acceptation; fit to be practised; enlightening the Mind; bringing the most important Notions to the Light; asserting the first Principles of all Religion; and shewing a consistent Scene of Providence thro' this Life to another in Eternity. Now the Miracles were done to prove himself *The Messiah*; and the Prophets had declared, that God *would put his Words into his Mouth, and that He should speak unto [his Brethren] all that God should command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my Words, which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him.* Deut. xviii. 18, 19. Consider then the Doctrines of our Saviour, and it is just matter of Praise, and Admiration, and Thankfulness, that the Great God and Father of all should condescend to impart this Knowledge of his Ways to Mankind, in order to lead them to Futurity, and to inform them how they might be happy; and should *previously* lay an Obligation on them to *hearken* to Him whom He should *send*, and prove to be *The Christ*.

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Hitherto I have taken it for granted, that the Miracles, said to be done by our Saviour, were really done as they are related. But are They not as *incredible in themselves*, as any other Miracles related in History? Or why should any one give Credit to These, more than to any of Those, which are mentioned as done by *Heathen* Writers? Or are they not justly liable to the same Exceptions, as the Fictions pretended to be done by *Apollonius*, or the Fables of the *Popish* Legends? We say, and it is true, that human Authority has its proper Weight; but then it is liable to Mistakes and Misrepresentations, to Ambiguities, and to all the Infirmities of our Constitutions; and the Water is not the clearer, but, on the contrary, the more foul, the further it goes from the Fountain-head. And when *Miracles* are the Subjects of any Authority, there is always something unusual, something beyond the Power of Man, related; and consequently such extraordinary Facts always create Suspicions, and Jealousies, and Doubts, which are not easily removed. The Miracles attested by the Best *Heathen* Writers are not much credited by any body; nay, they are generally rejected as false: And none of the *Popish* ones are admitted as real, except by those, whom Interest, or Party, has made over credulous, or blind. It must be added, that there are Hundreds of Miracles related, and most solemnly attested: Appeals
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are made to Heaven for the Truth of the Facts; and the Men that do them, as well as the Relators of them, are said to be Holy, Just, Good, Exemplary in their Lives, and zealous for the Glory of God. And yet the Things done are such, that no one can pay any Credit to them. They seem to be rather the frantic Follies of Madmen, in many Instances, than the Actions of any serious reasonable Creatures: And yet they come so much recommended, and so well attested, that their Truth (if Authority or Testimony, in such Cases, is to be regarded) can scarce be questioned. Must these then be all admitted, because they are *well vouched*? Or must they be all rejected, because they are *incredible* in themselves, notwithstanding they are *well attested*, and have the solemnest Appeals to God in behalf of their Truth? Or is there any Medium, by which we may distinguish between such as ought to be received, and such as ought to be rejected?

In Answer to this I must observe,

1. As Miracles may possibly be done by the Interposition of some Being superior to Man, so it must be owned, that They *may* be faithfully related, exactly as the Event was: And whenever they are faithfully related, they become as much the proper Objects of Belief, as any other historical Facts whatever. The Power of our Saviour, or of his Apostles, in virtue of supernatural Assistances, to cure a
Sick,

Sick, or a *Lame* Man, or to raise a *Dead* one, implies no Contradiction, nor is it an impossible Conception ; and therefore such a Power *may* possibly be exerted : And the Testimony of an *Eye-witness may be* faithfully set down in Words ; and what convinc'd a Spectator of the Truth of any extraordinary Fact, *may be* worthy of Credit. Suppose then the Relator to be no ways credulous ; to be faithful ; to be a Man of Judgment and Integrity ; to be not weak and superstitious ; not to have any other Interest to serve, but that of Right and Truth — Such Testimony *may be* credible in matter of *Miracle*, as well as in common Cases. For Miracles, how much soever above the Power of Man, are not above the Powers of Beings superior to Man ; and therefore *may be* done by such Interposition.

Be a Thing ever so surprizing, or unaccountable ; yet if it be *seen* done, and the Person that *sees* it, is *able* and *honest*, it will naturally have *great* Weight ; and Circumstances may be such, as to counterbalance the *Incredibility* of the Thing. But then, if the *Incredibility* of the *Thing* can be any ways removed, then the *Credibility* of the *Person* may be such, as to make his Relation of any Fact *credible*.

Let us suppose the Miracles of our Saviour to be Facts, as incredible in themselves, as other Miracles are ; yet if such Circumstances
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can be shewn in favour of his Miracles, as will shew a *Credibility* of a *supernatural Interposition*, in order to produce them; then the *Credibility* of the Person's relating them will give them actual Credit. Now, that our Saviour and his Apostles were under the Influence of a *Supernatural Assistance* will appear hereafter. Here I am only to shew the *Credibility* of the Persons, who have given us the History of his miraculous Actions. St. *John* gives us an Account of not only what he had *heard*, but of *that which he had seen with his Eyes, which he had looked upon, and his Hands had handled of the Word of Life.* 1 Ep. i. 1. St. *Matthew* was called to be an immediate Follower of Christ, and he arose, and followed him. *Matth.* ix. 9. He has mentioned a great many Instances of Miracles done by Christ, and some of that sort, that great Numbers of Witnesses could with ease have contradicted him, had he published any notorious Falshood. Thus when our Lord *filled Five thousand Men, besides Women and Children, with Five Loaves and Two Fishes, and they did all eat, and were filled, and they took up the Fragments that remained, twelve Baskets full.* *Matt.* xiv. 17—21. *John* vi. 9—13. Or when, at another time, *he took Seven Loaves, and a few little Fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his Disciples, and his Disciples to the Multitude, and Four thousand Men, besides Women and Children,*

Children, *did all eat, and were filled.* Matth. xv. 36—38.—Not only the Disciples of Christ, but great Numbers were *Eye-witnesses*, and must be sure of a Fact done in their *Sight*, and of which every particular Person there present received an immediate Advantage. The manner *How* this strange Increase was made is not here the Point; but it is the *Fact* that *Eye-witnesses* were capable of attesting; and if such *Fact* was done, these Persons were capable of declaring what they *saw* and *felt*.

And so it is in all the Instances, or almost all, that are recorded in the New Testament. They were such as were done *openly*; and the Appeal lay to every one's *Senses*. If our Saviour *spake the Word* only, and the Centurion's Servant was healed, *at a distance*, knowing nothing of what our Lord did, or would do; Matth. viii. 8. if a Leper came and said — *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*; and Jesus *put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, Be thou clean*; and immediately *his Leprosy was cleansed*; Ibid. ver. 1. if *he cast out Spirits with his Word, and healed all that were sick*; if no Distemper was so violent, but he could cure it with a *Word*; if Life itself was restored when lost, by a *Touch*, by a *Command* — Every body that *saw* what was done was a proper Witness, and could attest the Truth of what his *Senses* taught him.

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Here then the Objection, if any, must lie, not against the *Witnesses*, who are Persons of Credit, who *saw* and examined what they reported, and were not imposed on ; but it must be against the *Miracle* itself, as a thing *incredible* in its own Nature. For the *Historians* themselves have all those Qualities, which are requisite to make them believed, Faithfulness, Abilities, Resolution to speak the Truth, and a Detestation of Falshood, and were Eye-witnesses of what they relate. If indeed the Miracles related are ridiculous themselves, or have no End, or a bad one, they may justly be rejected, let the Historian be otherwise ever so able and judicious ; because in such Cases no Arguments can be brought, which will remove the Difficulty arising from the *Incredibility* of the thing itself.

2. It must be owned, that God may at any Time, or in any Place, interpose ; and, if he thinks fit, he may cure Diseases, heal the Sick, or restore Eyes to the Blind, or Feet to the ~~the~~ *Lame*, or relieve any distressed Person, and restore him to his Health, with or without any visible Means : And such Cases as these may be faithfully related, and the Facts may claim Belief, if really done. But these Cases being *possible* only, and not confirmed much by any Experience, other People have a Right to suspect, or doubt of the Truth, how much soever the Party relieved may have reason to be thankful for the Benefit received.

ceived. If the Credibility of the Relator outweighs the Improbability of such extraordinary Interposition, the Fact will be admitted; but if the Reverse happens, it will be rejected.

But let a divine Interposition be admitted; artful or ignorant People may annex *Consequences*, which they imagine to follow from such extraordinary Interpositions, which may safely be denied, tho' the *Fact* be acknowledged. A *Papist*, e. g. sees a miraculous Cure performed among the People of his Communion: yet when he infers this *Consequence*, — That therefore the *Roman Catholic Church* is the One *true Church* of Christ, and all who separate themselves from that Communion are guilty of *Heresy* or *Schism*, or are in a damnable Error — they conclude without any Premises. For God may cure as he thinks fit, and for Reasons which he thinks fit; and if He does not declare the Reasons of his Interposition, it is very easy for us to mistake them. Were he to declare, that his Interposition was for such a particular End; and a Man were convinced of the Truth of such a *Fact*; that Inference would be little questioned. But if a Person be cured at the Shrine or Tomb of any Saint, or before a Crucifix, or the Image of the Virgin *Mary*, or by the Touch of any *Relique*, neither the *Saint*, nor the *Image*, nor the *Relique* declare, that the Cure was effected by them: And if other

Here then the Objection, if any, must lie, not against the *Witnesses*, who are Persons of Credit, who *saw* and examined what they reported, and were not imposed on; but it must be against the *Miracle* itself, as a thing *incredible* in its own Nature. For the *Historians* themselves have all those Qualities, which are requisite to make them believed, Faithfulness, Abilities, Resolution to speak the Truth, and a Detestation of Falshood, and were Eye-witnesses of what they relate. If indeed the Miracles related are ridiculous themselves, or have no End, or a bad one, they may justly be rejected, let the Historian be otherwise ever so able and judicious; because in such Cases no Arguments can be brought, which will remove the Difficulty arising from the *Incredibility* of the thing itself.

2. It must be owned, that God may at any Time, or in any Place, interpose; and, if he thinks fit, he may cure Diseases, heal the Sick, or restore Eyes to the Blind, or Feet to the ~~the~~ *Lame*, or relieve any distressed Person, and restore him to his Health, with or without any visible Means: And such Cases as these may be faithfully related, and the Facts may claim Belief, if really done. But these Cases being *possible* only, and not confirmed much by any Experience, other People have a Right to suspect, or doubt of the Truth, how much soever the Party relieved may have reason to be thankful for the Benefit received.

ceived. If the Credibility of the Relator outweighs the Improbability of such extraordinary Interposition, the Fact will be admitted; but if the Reverse happens, it will be rejected.

But let a divine Interposition be admitted; artful or ignorant People may annex *Consequences*, which they imagine to follow from such extraordinary Interpositions, which may safely be denied, tho' the *Fact* be acknowledged. A *Papist*, e. g. sees a miraculous Cure performed among the People of his Communion: yet when he infers this *Consequence*, — That therefore the *Roman Catholic Church* is the *One true Church* of Christ, and all who separate themselves from that Communion are guilty of *Heresy* or *Schism*, or are in a damnable Error—they conclude without any Premises. For God may cure as he thinks fit, and for Reasons which he thinks fit; and if He does not declare the Reasons of his Interposition, it is very easy for us to mistake them. Were he to declare, that his Interposition was for such a particular End; and a Man were convinced of the Truth of such a *Fact*; that Inference would be little questioned. But if a Person be cured at the Shrine or Tomb of any Saint, or before a Crucifix, or the Image of the Virgin *Mary*, or by the Touch of any *Relique*, neither the *Saint*, nor the *Image*, nor the *Relique* declare, that the Cure was effected by them: And if other

People pretend to *declare*, by whom, or by what, the Cure is done, the Question will be, How they come to know it, and How they came to know the *Consequence* they draw? Such Inferences are the Mistakes, or the Delusions of interested or artful People, who are ready to impose upon, and make a Gain of ignorant Devotees; and by various Frauds and Lies to increase a Party, and promote a Faction in Religion. The Cure may be as unquestionable, as they would represent it; yet when all is done *in Silence*, and no *Declaration* is made by Him or Her that is pretended to do the Miracle, nor no Sign is given one way or other, the Fact may be allowed if sufficiently proved, at the same time the particular Being that does the Fact may be as much *unknown*, as if it never had been done; and the *End* too for which it was done, (if it was any thing different from the mere Cure of the distressed Person) may be as unknown, as the Being that did it. ^r "He must be a Man of extraordinary Skill in deed, who understands what *Silence* means," as *Cicero* on another Occasion observes.

3. The *End* of a Miracle may be *good*, i. e. it may be conceived to answer a *good Purpose*; but yet this is not always sufficient to make it *credible*. It is certainly true, that a visible *good End* is a much more probable ground of Belief

^r Peritum autem esse necesse est eum, qui quid sit *Silentium* intelligat. *Cic. de Divin. l. 2.*

Belief that a Miracle was really done, than the Ends which the idle and romantic Writers of Miracles usually abound in. But even here it is *hard* for us to say, (if it be *possible* at all) to how many, or to what Degree, *Good* must be extended, in order to the Belief of a Miracle. Will a Good done to a *single* Person, be sufficient to make one give Credit to the Report? A *Vestal* Virgin, accused of *Incontinency*, to shew her Chastity, is enabled to carry *Water in a Sieve*: Another, to vindicate her Character, is empowered to draw a Ship against the Stream with only her Girdle. Is the Vindication of *Innocency* in such Persons a sufficient Good to authorise, or give Credit to such miraculous Accounts? No; such Miracles done among the *Heathen* are not

* Extat Tuciae Vestalis incestae precatio, qua usa aquam tulit in Cribro, anno Urbis Romae, 609. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 31. c. 2. *Dionysius Halicarnassensis*'s Account is more to our Point. He had been telling a Miracle done by *Æmilia* upon her Prayer to *Vesta*; and then goes on, "But there was something yet more wonderful, and more like to a Fable, which I am going to relate. They say, that somebody accused one of the Holy Virgins, *Tucia* by Name, not indeed with letting the Fire go out, but with other probable Charges, tho' false. When the Virgin was ordered to make her Defence, she only said, that by her Works she would wipe off the false Accusation. As soon as she had said this, and had invoked the Goddess to be her Conductor, she went to the *Tiber*, the Pontiff granting her Leave, and the People following her thro' the City. When she came near the River, she ventured upon a bold Action, which is reckoned among the Principal of *Impossibilities*. She took in an empty Sieve Water out of the River, and carried it as far as to the *Forum*, and there poured it out at the Priest's Feet." *Dionys. Halicar.* l. 2.

not credited. Is the granting Health to the Sick, and Strength to the Weak and Lame, or the Removal of some grievous Distemper, an End sufficient to give Credit to a Miracle done for such Purposes? We refuse Assent to a thousand Stories of this sort, which *Popish* Writers are constantly relating. How great then must the *Good* be, or how *extensive*, to make a Miracle be believed? But,

4. It has been suggested by Learned Men, that as the Miracles done by Christ, and the Apostles, were done in Confirmation of the Truth of the Christian Religion; so the Miracles done *since* those Times were done for the *same End*. They were done to *confirm the Truths* of the *Gospel*; and since they were done to promote the *same End* as the Miracles of Christ were, and they are related by *Eye-witnesses*, or by Men of Abilities, and exact Enquirers into their Truth, they are all equally to be believed.

It must be owned, that if it were proved to any one's Satisfaction, that the Miracles done by the *Saints* (of which we have good Store, enough to satiate any Reader) were done to *confirm* the *Old Religion*, they ought to be equally credited with those of the *Gospel*. For Facts of the same sort, done for the same End, are equally credible. But supposing the Facts to be done, a Question will arise, How do we know that they were done for the *same End*? Does it appear, that

St. Mar.

St. *Martin*, or *Macarius*, or any other Saint, ever *declared* that This was the *End* of their Miracles? Among the numerous Miracles reported to be done, we are told of certain Facts; (*e. g.* the turning of a *Maggot* into a *precious Jewel* by *Simeon Stylites*; or when a Woman appeared like a *Mare* to the Spectators, *Macarius* made her appear like a *real Woman* by pouring holy Water on her Head) but rarely, if ever, is it said, that such Acts are done in Confirmation of the Religion of Christ. The Miracles related are commonly bare Facts; they are surprising Cures; or something extraordinary done by Exorcisms, by Holy Water, or consecrated Oil; strange Preservations from Flames, all around burning but not hurting; casting out Devils, &c. But *why*, or for *what End*, all this is done, there is generally a profound Silence. Supposing that God were now to work a Miracle, and not to declare for what End He did it, are we to infer that He did it to *confirm the Old Religion*? Or might he not design any more than a Manifestation of Himself to a careless inconsiderate People? Or may He not do good to any Person without comprehending, or taking in, at the same time, the Confirmation of the *Gospel of Christ*?

It was not in this manner that our Saviour proceeded. He declared himself to be *THE Son of Man* foretold, and sometimes expressly called himself *THE CHRIST*; and He ap-
pealed

pealed to the Works he did in his Father's Name, as *bearing Witness* of him. *The Works*, says he, *which I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me. Many good Works have I shewed you from my Father. — If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not : But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* John x. 25, 32, 37, 38. There was no Occasion, or Necessity, that he should, upon working every Miracle he did, *expressly declare* for what End he did it. He was *foretold* and *described* by a great many *Characters*; and he declared, that he was the Person so *described*; and his wonderful Works would make all that expected that he would redeem *Israel*, examine into his Pretensions, by comparing Him and his Actions with what the Prophets had said: Whereas the Miracles done in After-times are, generally speaking, but *mere Facts*, upon which nothing depends; and what may relate to any thing else, as well as to Christ, or his Religion: At least this is true of the greatest Part of them, which seem to be Exertions of mere Power without any End or Purpose.

I would not by this seem to intimate, that an extraordinary Power may not be exerted by God upon particular Occasions, or to serve a particular Purpose. All that I would be understood to mean is, that the Miracles said to be

be done by the Ancients or Moderns, do not seem to be done in Confirmation of the *Old Religion* of Christ: But may as well be for any other End as That, since no End is at all declared. And it might as properly be said, that every Miracle worked by any Prophet, or other *Jew*, was to confirm the *Law* of *Moses*, as that every Miracle worked since the Days of our Saviour was to confirm the *Old Religion* of *Christ*. But,

5. As we abound with Relations of Miracles done in all Parts of the World by Men renowned for their Sanctity; and it is undoubtedly true, that many Miracles have been imposed upon the World, which upon Examination have been found to be false; and even False ones have been related as true by Men of Probity, and sometimes they seem to have been told with pious Designs to do good, and sometimes with worse Views; and all Miracles have, at the first View, the Marks of Improbability — Is there any Test by which we may judge of the Miracles done by our Lord and his Disciples, and know that They were really done? Or can we point out any Difference betwixt Them and Those that have been done, or are pretended to have been done, *since those Times*, so as to make the One more credible than the Other? Or, in short, How may we fairly point out the Difference betwixt what we are to believe, and what we are to reject?

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It must be allowed, that the *Attestation* given to many Miracles (even to Those which are certainly to be rejected) is such, that it is not an easy matter, in many Cases, to call their Evidence in question, if we regard the Credibility only of the Relator. But then, on the other hand, such Facts are so improbable in themselves, and such is the Credulity of many honest well-meaning Men, that one cannot but doubt and suspect the Stories one reads, let them be vouched almost ever so strongly. But in the Case of Christ and his Apostles we can arrive at a degree of *Certainty*, that They were endued with *Power from on High*. It is not therefore *incredible*, or *improbable*, that they should work Miracles, or that what is related of their Acts should be true; since *we ourselves* can be certain that *they* had *supernatural* Assurances. This is what we cannot have full *Assurance* of in *others*; and therefore the Attestations of things incredible in themselves are justly to be *doubted*; and the Assurances pretended may be denied; nor do they usually afford sufficient Evidence to others, be they e're so true. But in the particular Case of our Saviour and his Apostles, we can argue from an *apparent well known Interposition* of a superior Power in *one* Instance, to a *credible Interposition* of a superior Power in *another*.

But before I explain this more at large, I must previously add, That the Argument for the Truth or Credibility of the Miracles of Christ

Christ and the Apostles, not only has all the Advantages which the Argument for any other Historical Fact has; but has likewise an additional Strength, which almost all other past Facts are deficient in.

First, They have the Attestation of Men of Probity and Integrity, that many Facts were done by them, which were superior to any Powers of Men. Not only *Jesus* of *Nareth* did truly many Signs in the Presence of his Disciples, but many Wonders were done by the *Apostles* in his Name, and by a Power derived from him. All the Topics taken from sufficient Information, Ability to know, and Honesty to relate; the Persecutions they underwent for the Truth of their Testimonies; their Consciousness of the heinous Crime of Lying; their preaching constantly their Accountableness to God for all their Actions; and their Sense of the Justice of their Damnation, who did *Evil that Good might come of it*; their leaving all things for the Truth of Christ; their exposing themselves to Imprisonment, to Stripes, to be stoned, to be shipwrecked, to all sorts of Hazards and Inconveniences for the sake of Christ; in short, every Topic that tends to confirm the Truth of the things which the first Disciples of Christ wrote or taught, has here its fullest Strength. Whatever then is urged from the *Credibility* of *Persons* who were *Eye-witnesses*; who were well informed; and had a Disposition to re-

late the Truth; must necessarily be allowed to have its full Weight, and is capable of being urged in the strongest Manner in behalf of the Christian Miracles.

But it may be replied to this, that we meet with other Miracles which stand upon this Foundation, and have the Support of credible Witnesses, viz. of pious, good, honest Vouchers, which yet are rejected as false. Be it so. I therefore add,

Secondly, That the *Enemies* to Christianity have born their Testimonies to the Miracles of Christ, as well as the Friends of the Gospel; and consequently the Truth of the Gospel does not depend solely upon the Testimonies of Men that may be charged, or are pretended to be charged, with *Credulity*, or *Folly*, or even *Forgery* itself. *Julian* the Apostate bears Witness to the Wonders done by St. *Paul*, when he says, ^t “ that he excelled all
“ the Workers of Tricks that ever were. And of our Saviour he says, ^u “ That He has not
“ been heard of much above three hundred
“ Years; nor did he do any thing worthy of
“ being spoken of, unless any one should
“ imagine, that to cure the *Lame and Blind*,
“ and

^t Τὸν πάντας πανταχῶς καὶ πόποτε γέντας καὶ ἀπατεῶνας
ὑπερβαλλόμενον Παῦλον. Julian. apud Cyrillum l. iii.

^u Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς—ὀλίγας αἰεὶς πῶς τελευτούσας ἐναντοῖς ὀνο-
μάζεται, ἐργασαμένη παρ’ ὃν ἔζη χρόνον ἔργον ἔδειν ἀκοῆς
ἀξίον, εἰ μὴ πρὸς οἶεται καὶ κυλλὰς καὶ τυφλὰς ἰασαῖς καὶ δαι-
μονῶντας ἐφορρίζειν ἐν Βηθσαῖδᾳ καὶ ἐν Βηθανίᾳ καὶ κώμας, καὶ
μεγίστων ἔργων ἔδει. Ibid. l. vi.

“ and to *adjure those that were possessed* in the
 “ Villages of *Bethsaida* and *Bethany*, were
 “ any mighty Matters.” *Julian* might *lessen*
 and speak as contemptuously as he pleased of
 the Miracles of Christ; but as he does not *de-*
ny them to be done, it is not of any Confe-
 quence that he was willing to *diminish*, what
 he could not *contradict*. He owns here that
 he cured *the Lame*, and *Blind*, and *Mad*: He
 ought therefore to have made such Cures the
 Matter of Admiration, and not to have treat-
 ed them as Trifles. But let him treat them
 in his own manner, since he expressly allows
 such Facts to be done: and let him confine
 them to these two Villages, since Miracles are
 Miracles where-ever they are performed. So
 when he calls St. *Paul* γόητης, one that *by*
Tricks imposes upon the People — However he
 expresses himself, he confesses the *Fact*, that
 the Apostle made Converts of the People by
 the *Signs* and *Wonders* he did. Just as when
 he speaks with Reproach and Ignominy of
 the Cross, and censures the Christians as
 “ w mad Men and Fools for leaving the eter-
 “ nal Gods, [he means the Heathen Gods]
 “ to go over to the *Jews* to worship a *dead*
 “ *Man*,” he must by this acknowledge that
 Christ did in fact *die*, as the Scriptures relate
 the Story. Again, x “ Jesus, says he, who
 “ *commanded*

w Ἀποστολὴς ἐλεήσας, οἱ — τὸν αἰώνιος ἀφέντες Θεός,
 ἐπὶ τῇ Ἰουδαίῳ μεταβῆναι νεκρὸν. Ibid.

x Ἰησοῦς ὁ τοῖς πνεύμασιν ὁπταίων, καὶ βασιλεύων ἐπὶ τῇ βα-
 λύσει,

“ *commanded Spirits, and walked upon the*
 “ *Sea, and drove out Devils, and, as you*
 “ *say, made Heaven and Earth :* For none
 “ of his Disciples, except *John*, dared to say
 “ this ; nor did even *he* dare to say this plain-
 “ ly and explicitly : but let it be granted that
 “ he said this.” He allows, in these Words,
Jesus’s commanding Spirits, and his walking
on the Sea, and his driving out Devils ; and
 he owns that *St. John* said, that he *made the*
Heaven and Earth. This last he admits on-
 ly for Argument sake, but the other *three*
Miracles he allows as *Faëts*, never denying
 that he *did* them ; which would have been
 more to *Julian’s* Purpose, than to treat them
 as *trifling* Acts. So when he resumes this
 Affair, and cites, on another Occasion, *Paul*,
 and *Matthew*, and *Mark*, and *Luke*, and
John, he acknowledges by this the *Books* un-
 der their respective Names, and cites them as
 Authorities from whom he all along argues.
 How would *Julian* have triumphed, had he
 had any Evidence by which he could have
 set aside the *Miracles* of Christ, or the A-
 postles ? Could he have *denied* the *Books* of the
 Apostles, or the *Faëts* contained in them, his
 reasoning against Christianity would have had
 infinitely *more Strength* than it can have,
 when

λάσσης, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐξελώντων· ὡς ὃ ὑμεῖς διέλετε, καὶ ἐξα-
 νδόν καὶ τὴν γῆν ἀπεργασάμενοι· καὶ γὰρ οὗ ταῦτα τοῦτο λημνέ τις
 εἶπεν· ὅτι αὐτὸς τὴν μαθητῶν ἐν μὴ μόνον Ἰωάννης, καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ
 σαρῶν, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς ἄλλοι· εἰρηκέναι γε συλκεχωρήσιν. Ibid.

when the Facts are *allowed*, and *accounted* for by what every Man of common Capacity sees to be absurd, and unequal to the Effects.

But let us ascend a little nearer to the Times of Christ. *Hierocles* wrote against the Christians some Thirty or Forty Years before *Julian*; and the Method he took was that of *comparing together* the Actions of our Lord, and Those of *Apollonius Tyanaeus*. On this he says, that the Christians y “ make a great deal
“ of Noise, honouring *Jesus* as making the
“ *Blind to see*, and doing some such like
“ Wonders.” He goes on, and tells us, that z “ in the Times of our Ancestors, under
“ *Nero's* Reign, *Apollonius* of *Tyana* flou-
“ rished, who being very young, a mere
“ Boy, having sacrificed to *Esculapius* in *Æ-*
“ *gæ* of *Cilicia*, did many, and those wonder-
“ ful, Works.” After numbering up these Miracles of *Apollonius*, *Hierocles* goes on, and says, a “ For what Reason do I mention these?
“ That I may make a Comparison between
“ our

y Ἄνω καὶ κάτω θρυλλῶσι, σημνυῶντες τὸ Ἰησοῦν, ὡς τυφλοῖς ἀνατρέχειν τε ὡραζόντα, καὶ πῶτα ποιεῖν τε δαυμάσια. Euseb. c. Hieroclem.

z Ἐπὶ τῷ παρῳόντων ἡλικίᾳ καὶ τῷ Νέρωνος βασιλείᾳ, Ἀπολλωνίου ἡκμασεν ὁ Τυανεύς, ὅς ἐκ παιδὸς κομίδῃ νέος, καὶ ἀφ' ἑπερ ἐν Ἀιγαῖς τῇ κυλικίᾳ ἱεράτατο πρὸς εἰλανθρώπων Ἀσκληπιῶ πολλὰ καὶ θαυμάσια διεπράξατο. Ibid.

a Τίνος ἐν ἔνεκα τῶτων ἐμνήδω, ἵνα ἐξῇ συσκεῖναι τὸ ἡμετέραν ἀκρεῖαν καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ κείσιν, καὶ τῷ Χριστιανῶν κωφότητι. Ἐπερ ἡμεῖς μὲν τὸ ποιεῖν τε πεποιηκότα, καὶ θεὸν, ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κατὰ εἰσὺρον ἀνδρά ἡγούμεθα. Οἱ δὲ δὲ ὀλίγας τε-
ρατείας πῶτα τὸ Ἰησοῦν θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσιν. Ibid.

“ *our exact and well grounded Judgment of*
 “ *each Fact, and the Trifling of the Christi-*
 “ *ans; since we do not look upon him that*
 “ *did these things as God, but as a Man fa-*
 “ *voured by the Gods; but They proclaim*
 “ *Jesus, for doing some small Miracles, to*
 “ *be God.*” Could *Hierocles* set out in this
 manner, and profess to *compare* the wonder-
 ful Actions of Two Persons, and at the same
 time not allow the One to have done any Facts
 at all? Could he pretend to compare *nothing*
 with *something*, in order to give the Prefe-
 rence of the One to the Other? Had he
 charged our Saviour with only *pretending* to a
 Power of working Miracles, whilst *Apolloni-*
us had a real Power; or if our Lord’s Won-
 ders were *Trifles* tho’ *real*, whereas those of
Apollonius were *great*, and shewed a much
 superior Power, it might have been worth his
 while to have run a Comparison between
 them: But to suppose our Saviour’s Miracles
 to have *not been worked at all*, and *Apollonius’s*
 to have been *real*, is not to compare *Two*
Things, or *Two Facts*, but *Nothing* with a *real*
Fact, which is an Absurdity in Terms. If
Hierocles thought that the Facts of Both were
equally false, and that the Comparison was
 only of *Two Falshoods* which was the grossest:
 This might have been done consistently in-
 deed, but then his whole Scheme must have
 been altered. For he could not then have
preferr’d Apollonius to Christ, or have made
 him

him to be *greater* in Action, or more *highly favoured* by the Gods; for this requires a real Supposition and Belief that his Actions at least were *True*, not *false*: and consequently his *comparing* the Two Men's Actions together must suppose a *Reality* of *Both* their Actions. *Hierocles* therefore, a known, warm Opposer of Christianity, and an open avowed *Enemy* to Christians, by naming the Miracles of *Christ*, and comparing them with the Miracles of *Apollonius*, bears witness to the *Truth* of the Miracles of *Christ*, because he imagined the Miracles of *Apollonius* to be *true*.

But *Hierocles*, as *Eusebius* assures us, "took, " not only his Sentiments, but his very, " Words from others," and particularly had *Celsus* before him: It may therefore be worth our while to consider what *Celsus* himself has said on this occasion; for *Celsus* is allowed by all to be as acute an *Enemy* to Christianity as ever wrote against it. If therefore it appears that He likewise *admitted* and *allowed* the Miracles of *Christ*, it is and must be evident, that we have the Testimony of *Enemies* as well as *Friends* in Confirmation of their Truth, and consequently may give Credit to them. For what *Enemies* as well as *Friends* admit, always is allowed to be highly probable. Now *Celsus* ^b "accuses our Saviour as being " enabled by *Art* or *Trick* to have done
N " those

^b Κατηγορεῖ — καὶ τὸ σωτῆρ, ὡς γυντεῖα δυνάμεντος αὐτοῦ παρὰ δόξαν ποιηκέναι. Orig. c. Celsum. l. i.

“ those Miracles he did.” These artful Impostors, it seems, could make those things *seem* to be, which *were not*, and those things which *are*, they could so dextrously conceal as to make Men believe they were not. When therefore *Celsus* would account in this manner for what our Saviour did, he must acknowledge the Facts done, or else it would be absurd to pretend to a Solution how they were done. And so in another place, when he “ calumniates the Miracles of Christ as “ if they were performed by *Magic Arts*, “ and not by any Divine Power,” and adds, “ that *Jesus* was privately educated in *Egypt*, “ and becoming skilful in some of their *Arts*, “ returned from thence, proclaiming himself “ to be God by means of those wonderful “ Powers;” — When He says this, He must own the *Facts done*, be it in his own way, by *Magic*, or in any other manner. When again he says, ^d “ that the *Wonders* which *Jesus* did, were what he *learnt* of the *Egyptians*,” — It is confessed that he *learnt* what he did, and *did* what he learnt, or else it would be ridiculous in this manner to attempt to solve the Appearance. Should any one object to this, and take notice that in other

^c Διαβάλλον δ' αὐτὰς βελομένους ὡς ἀπὸ μαγίας, καὶ εἰ
 δεῖα δυνάμεις γηγνημένας. Φησὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν σκόπον τεραφάντα
 — δυνάμεων πῶν περαδόντα, ἐκείθεν ἐπαγελθεῖν, θεὸν δὲ
 ἐκείναι τὰς δυνάμεις αὐτὸν ἀναγορεύοντα. Ibid.

^d Παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις μύμαθηκότα ποιηκέναι. Ibid.

other places He * “ treats not only the Miracles which the Christians mentioned as done “ by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, but those likewise which the *Jews* mention in *Their* “ Books, as *Fables*”—This will shew *Celsus* to have had no certain Scheme by which he could attack the *Christians*; and that he said any thing either to *lessen*, or to *calumniate*, what he could not fairly refute: but he produces no *Voucher*, no *Authority*, whereby he could justify what he said.

Be it so then, that *Celsus* did in some Parts of his Book call the Miracles of the Bible, *Fables*; yet if in other places he tries to *account for* them, and imputes them sometimes to *Magic*, at other times to *Art* or *slight of hand*, he must suppose the *Facts* to be done. Thus he † pretends to grant “ to be true, “ whatever is said concerning either the *Cures*, “ or the *Resurrection* of *Jesus*, or his *feeding* “ many with a few Loaves, of which many “ Fragments were left.” But then “ presently he makes them to be just the same “ with the *Feats* of those who are dextrous “ in *slight of hand*, and promise strange “ things; or of those who have learnt of the “ *Egyptians* to shew *Tricks* in public for

N 2

“ half-

* Καὶ τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀναγκαζομένα πρῶτα, εἰτ' Ἰουδαῖα, εἰτε καὶ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῶ μαθητῆς αὐτοῦ μύθος ἢ νεόμικτος. Ibid. lib. 8.

† Περσποιεῖται συγχωρεῖν ἀληθῆ ἢ, ὅσα περὶ θεοπρατειῶν, ἢ ἀναστασιως, ἢ περὶ ἄρτων ὀλίγων θεοφαντων πολλὰ ἀναγκαζεσθαι, ἀρ' ὧν λείψανα πολλὰ καταλείπειται. Id. l. 1.

“ half-pence; and of those who *drive Devils* out of People, and *blow away Dis-*
 “ *eases*, and call up the Souls of Heroes,
 “ and shew rich Entertainments, and Tables
 “ and Victuals of all sorts; and moving Ani-
 “ mals, which are not Animals, but only
 “ *appear* to be such.” It was a ridiculous
 Solution of the Miracles done by Christ, to
 treat them in this manner; for whoever went
 about (as *Origen* here remarks) to g “ shew
 “ Tricks, in order to mend the *Manners* of
 “ the World, or to teach them so to live as
 “ that they might be justified before God?”
 But when he compares the wonderful Works
 of Christ with the *Tricks* of these Circulators,
 he must suppose the Facts done, *really* or in
Appearance; and if they were the Arts of
Legerdemain, as in general he supposes, yet
 this *allows* the things for which he is trying
 to account.

But say that *Celsus* did not at all believe,
 nor admit the Facts which were said to be
 done by Christ, but is all along speaking of
 what *Christians* believed and admitted;—this
 shews that he *knew* of them; and tho’ he did
 not

* Καὶ ἐνδεώς κοινοποιεῖ αὐτὰ πρὸς τὰ ἔργα γρήτων, ὡς ὑπε-
 ρφαιμένων θαυμασιότησα, καὶ πρὸς τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν μαδόντων ὑπὸ
 Αἰγυπτίων ἐπιτελέμενα ἐν μέσαις ἀγοραῖς, ὁλίγων ὁσολῶν ἀπα-
 δομένων τὰ σιμνα μαθήματα, καὶ δαίμονας ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων ὁρ-
 λαυόντων, καὶ νόσους ἀπορυσσόντων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἡρώων ἀνακαλῶν-
 των, δεικνύοντα τε πολυτελῆ καὶ τραπέζας καὶ πύματα καὶ ὅσα τὰ
 ἐκ ὄντα δεικνύοντα, καὶ ὡς ζῶα κινούντων ἐκ ἀληθείας ὄντα ζῶα
 ἀλλὰ μετὰ φαντασίας φαινόμενα πιαῦτα. Ibid.

not profess his *Belief* of them, yet he did not offer to refute those who did believe them by any *Historical Evidence* against them. He did not produce any Authority against them, which his Subject naturally led him to do, had he been able ; and whilst he tries to account for them by *Art*, or Skill in *Magic*, or *Legerdemain*, he must either admit *something* to be done by Christ, or he must account for *nothing* by his *Magic* or *Legerdemain*. In the first case, He is an *Enemy attesting* a Fact ; which is a Confirmation positive and direct : In the other case, He does *not deny*, but attempts to *solve* a *Fact* ; which necessarily must suppose the *Fact*, tho' he differs about the *Means* by which it was done. But,

Thirdly, The Miracles of Christ have a peculiar Evidence, which is strictly conclusive to any one that will attend. If we ourselves can *see*, and be as certain as our Senses can make us, that our Saviour and his Apostles were under the Influence of a Power vastly superior to That of any Man, then we ourselves may *see* a Testimony equal to what we can desire, concurring with the Testimony which we have from both Friends and Enemies ; and giving a Degree of Credibility, which the Miracles of all other Persons are defective in. I do not by this mean to affirm, that all other Miracles are *fictitious* : Nor would I be understood, as if all others were
to

to be condemned as *false*, except those that the Scripture mentions. I enter not into that Question, nor concern myself one way or other about it. They may, at least some of them may be, what their Relators have said about them: And if the Evidence given be such as satisfies a reasonable Enquirer, He ought to acquiesce, and admit them to be true. But if, on the other hand, the Attestation be such as leaves the mind *dubious* and *suspicious*, or *unsatisfied*, They may be rejected without any Mischief; and yet the Miracles of the Apostles, and of their *Master*, may be maintained as certain and true, which is all that I am concerned to make good.

To shew then the Credibility of the Miracles of Christ, it is necessary to observe, that no Human Power can, or does extend to the *Foretelling* future Events: And if any Man can precisely determine what shall happen at any given distance of Time; or can tell the Circumstances of Actions, or even Actions themselves, many Years, or many Hundreds of Years before they come to pass: —Such Man must be assisted with a Degree of Knowledge greater than ever falls to the lot of common Men. Now the New Testament affords us many Instances of this sort of Knowledge in *Jesus Christ*; and his *Apostles* had the same sort of Knowledge communicated to them: And so had *Moses* and the *Prophets* the same. *E. g.* The Destruction of
Jerusalem

Jerusalem was foretold ; its being to be trod down of the *Gentiles* till the *Times of the Gentiles* be fulfilled ; its present Continuance in the State which was so punctually foretold ; the *Preservation* of the *Jews* amidst all the Persecutions and Hatred they every where lie under : The *Blindness* that has happened to them : The *Apostacy* that has been in the Church of Christ : The very *Manner* and *Circumstances* of the *Apostacy*, which was to consist in doing the very things which the Gospel forbids : The coming of the *Man of Sin*, who as God sitteth in the *Temple of God*, shewing himself that he is God : The manner of his gaining his Power by *Signs*, and *lying Wonders*, and all *Deceivableness of Unrighteousness* : The *Worship of Demons*, or Souls departed : The *forbidding to marry* : The *abstaining from Meats*, which God hath created to be received with *Thankfulness* : The *Persecuting Spirit*, and That *Dominion* over the Lord's Heritage, which was to be the Mark of that idolatrous Power which was to arise—These and a great many other things have been foretold by our Saviour and his Apostles ; and the Event has exactly verified the Prediction.

I mention not several other things foretold in the Scriptures, plain, easily intelligible, express, not liable to be charged with being forged after the Events. Now We ourselves see these *Predictions* actually fulfilled : And
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We are certain that Those who could *foretel* such wonderful Events, must have been under the Influence of a Power superior to That of Man. Suppose now, that the Men who so truly *foretold* things to come, are said by *credible Witnesses* to have worked *Miracles*, the Attestation instantly becomes credible, because We ourselves are sure that They were under a *supernatural, extraordinary* Power: a Power! able and sufficient to produce the Miracles they are said to have performed.

I do not from hence infer, (nor indeed can any one justly infer) that all Miracles are forged or counterfeit, that are *not attended* with Prophecy; but, (which is all that I want to prove) that those *are credible* that are accompanied with it. They who *see* a Miracle done, are as sure as their *own Eyes* can make them, of the Truth of such a Fact. But then the Testimony of *Eye-witnesses*, or the Report of such to others, may be perhaps doubted or denied, when it comes to be handed down from one to another, if the Fact be such as carries great Improbability in its Nature. But where a Man can *see* himself a plain Exercise of a *supernatural* Power in *one* Instance, He can have no good reason to doubt of, or to deny it in *another*, if that *other* comes attested by Men of Abilities and Integrity. Why should any one doubt of his performing a *Miracle*, whom we ourselves can *see* to have been under a *supernatural Influence*,

fluence, when we have the Testimony of very credible Witnesses, that he did do one? Were it only said, without any Circumstance, or without any other Evidence, that such a one had an extraordinary Power which he could exert as he pleased, this might justly be *suspected* or *denied*: But if we ourselves can *see* such Power *actually exerted*, in a Case beyond the natural Powers of Man, we may easily infer the *Credibility* of a *Fact* reported of the same Person, tho' beyond the Powers of Man.

Some perhaps may say, that this is proving the Credibility of one dubious thing by another: They will urge the Ambiguity, the Uncertainty of all such Books as contain, or pretend to contain Predictions: And they will appeal for the Truth of their Assertions to the *Revelations* of St. *John*, or to the Prophecies of *Daniel*; and, in short, to the very Nature of the Prophetic Language, which they will pretend to be perfectly unintelligible.

But This is no manner of Answer to the Argument. It is just such reasoning as this—Poetical Figures and Expressions are often dark, and ambiguous, in the very best Writers; and Commentators have often differed, and new Discoveries have been made about the Meaning of Passages which had escaped former Writers on them—Therefore the *Whole* in those Writers is perfectly unintelligible.

ble. When it was foretold that the Messiah was to be a *Man of Sorrows*, to be *wounded for our Transgressions*, to be *cut off from the Land of the Living*, could there be any thing expressed more plain and more intelligible? Are there not many, very many, plain clear Prophecies, such as neither Art nor Interest can elude? Is not the *Apostacy* in the Church of Christ so described, that a Man must shut his Eyes not to see it? But then if People will *close their Eyes*, lest at any time they should see with them, or *shut their Ears* lest they should hear, the want of understanding arises, not from want of Light or Clearness in the Object, but from Obstinacy or Perverseness, against which God has provided no Remedy. Are not the particular Circumstances of the Corruption that has happened in the Church of Christ clearly and expressly *foretold*? And do not those, whose Interest it is to evade the Charge, pervert the plainest Words, that they may not be self-condemned? Is not the *State* of the *Jews* at this present Time just as St. *Paul* foretold it should be? And so it is with *Christianity*, just as our Saviour and the Apostles described it in the Times they mentioned: And what is very remarkable — The Madness of Christians has accomplished, what was expressly and in Terms *forbidden* by Christ. So that it is not merely a *Prophecy* that is *accomplished*; but it is a Completion of one, which *forbad* the ve-

ry Practices which they have introduced. How has the Mystery of Iniquity worked *with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness?*

The first grand Principle of all Religion, natural as well as revealed, of the *Jewish* as well as of the *Christian*, is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve*: And the second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*. These are so plain and clear, that no one can contest them. Is there then not an *Apostacy* foretold, or hath not *the Spirit* spoken expressly, *that in the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith?* 1 Tim. iv. 1--4. If a Question were to arise, In what was this *Apostacy* to consist? The Apostle tells us, it was to consist in the Violation of this First grand Principle of all Religion, in the introducing of another Object of Worship besides God; in the *worshipping* of *Demons*; in praying and paying Honour to *departed Men and Women*; in calling for Aid upon *Souls departed*. And is not the *Mother of Fornication* described as *drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus?* Rev. xvii. 6. Is not this in express Contradiction to *Both* the Grand Principles of the Religion of Christ? Look into the World, and see if the Event has not been as exactly completed, as it was foretold. Supposing therefore that there is an *Obscurity* in *several* Prophecies, it

is very unfair to argue from them, as if *all* Prophecy were unintelligible, when there are so many *clear* and *plain* Predictions, not liable to any such Objection. Surely the way of reasoning from *Prophecy*, is to be taken from what is *clear*, and thence to proceed to what is more hard or intricate, and thus to try from plain things to discover obscure ones; and not to pretend that *every thing* is obscure, and therefore that *all* is to be rejected. Let any one apply such a Method to *Geometry*, or to what is *scientific*; and argue, that because Sir *Isaac Newton's* Principles are hard, and Few are capable of understanding them *thoroughout*, therefore *all Geometry* is unintelligible, and ought to be discarded, as not worth the trouble of Study or Attention.

What I would infer from all this is, That we ourselves, who are now alive, can *see* exactly such a State of things in the World, as the Sacred Books have all along declared that there should be. Let the intelligent Christian look about him, and see, and wonder. The Writers of those Books could not *of Themselves*, or by any common Sagacity, *foresee* such a State, or *foretell* that things should come to pass in the particular Manner which they described, and with all the Circumstances which they foretold. They must therefore have been under the Influence of some *supernatural* Power, which enabled them to discover what they *foretold*. Now
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the Being that enabled them to *foretell* Events, at such *distant* Periods, and so *minutely*, might enable them to *do* what credible Witnesses have related concerning them. From whence it follows undeniably, that the *Miracles* of the Gospel are *credible*, and may justly be deemed *True*, whatever becomes of all others. Whilst we have no grounds to think, that other People were under any *supernatural Influence*, except merely the Report that they worked *Miracles*, one may suspect, or doubt, or even deny the Facts they are said to have done; or leave them to the Credit of those who relate them: But when we are sure that Christ and his Apostles were under the Influence of some Power superior to that of Man, in *one* Instance, of which we ourselves are competent Judges; we may be sure that the Miracles performed by them ought to be looked upon as credible, since the supernatural Power that enabled them to foretell future Events was sufficient to enable them to work Miracles.

Thus have I considered the Two Points I proposed to speak to. If I have been able to throw any Light on either of them, and particularly on the *Last*, I shall rejoice. It is certain, that many good Men, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, have been of late not a little perplexed in their Minds, about the *Credibility* of Miracles. They see the

the Folly of believing the *Popish* and other Legendary Stories ; and yet cannot find a Way to extricate themselves out of the Labyrinth they are in. If the Clue here given be of Use, I have my End ; if not, it behoves all who regard the Religion of Christ, to point out a better and surer ; and so to treat of the Miracles done since the Apostolic Times, as not to throw insuperable Difficulties on Those of our Saviour and his Apostles.

Permit me to add one Thing before I conclude. There are in the World, 1st, Accounts of Miracles done by and among the *Heathen*. There are, 2. The *Jewish* and *Christian* Miracles, *i. e.* those done in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his Apostles ; which I reckon as standing on the same Foot. There are, 3. The Miracles related by the *Fathers* : And there are, 4. The *Popish* Miracles, of which one may read to a Surfeit in the *Writers* or *Collectors* of their *Saints Lives*. I have sufficiently shewn, why the *Jewish* and *Christian* Miracles are *credible*. It behoves those, who reject the *Heathen* and the *Popish* Miracles, to shew the Difference, as to *Credibility*, betwixt Them and Those of the *Fathers* : Or if Those of the *Fathers* are to be admitted upon the Evidence of their *Authority* ; then, why are the *Heathen* and *Popish* Miracles to be rejected, which seem to stand on equal Authority ? Or if the Miracles of the *Papists* are to be admitted, then why are
Those

Those of the *Heathen* to be rejected? Or if Those of the *Fathers* are to be admitted—Are *All* of Them, or *Some* only? Or why are *Some* of Them only to be credited, and *which*? And what *Criteria* are there, by which we may distinguish which are, and which are not to be *credited*? An Enquiry into these Particulars is beyond the Bounds of what I undertook ; which being only to shew, what are the Grounds upon which the Credibility of Miracles, *in general*, is founded ; and, upon what Grounds the Miracles of the Gospel, *in particular*, are credible : I shall leave those other Points to be discussed by Those, who are, or may be, engaged in the Controversy with Dr. MIDDLETON.

A
DISSERTATION

On MARK XVI. 17, 18.

*And these Signs shall follow them that believe :
In my Name shall they cast out Devils ;
They shall speak with new Tongues ; They
shall take up Serpents, and if they drink
any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ;
They shall lay hands on the Sick, and they
shall recover.*

WHAT our Saviour intended by the
Word *Signs*, is sufficiently clear from
the Instances here specified ; by which it is
plain that certain extraordinary miraculous
Gifts or *Powers* are here promised to *Them*
that believe in Him. That these Signs were
manifested in and by the *Apostles*, and others,
Jews and *Gentiles*, after our Lord's Death
and Ascension, needs no Proof to any that
give Credit to the New Testament. It may
be however proper just to mention some par-
ticular Instances : And as to the Credibility
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of them, I shall refer the Reader to what I have already said.

What the particular *Distemper*, or *Disorder* was, which was attributed or imputed to *Devils* or *Demons*; and whether such Beings do, or did, in fact *obsess* or *possess* any body; or whether such or such peculiar *ill Habit*, or *Crafs* of Body, curable by Art, or incurable by human means, is designed by that Expression, let the learned Reader, who has looked into *Hippocrates De Morbo Sacro*, and other *Physicians* among the *Antients*, or into the judicious Dr. *Mead's Medica Sacra*, not long since published, judge. I shall not enter into that Enquiry here; but shall only observe that it is well known, that both *Greeks* and *Romans* imputed certain Disorders of the Body to *Demons*; and from the *Symptoms* named the *very Demon* that was supposed to possess the miserable Mortal. The *Sign* here promised by our Lord was, a Power in an extraordinary and miraculous manner to cure such Persons as laboured under the Distresses, either supposed to be, or which actually were, inflicted by *Demons*. Or if a Spirit was the real, or supposed, Worker of such Actions as served to impose on People, and to lead them into false Notions of *Spiritual Dominion*, which might turn them from the living God; then the *Sign* promised was a Power, in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, to put an End to all such

such Deceit, and to take away the Cause of it. Thus, *When a damsel possessed with a Spirit of Divination followed Paul about for many Days, Paul said unto the Spirit, I command thee in name of Jesus Christ to come out of her: And he came out the same hour, Acts xvi. 16—18.* It is remarked of St. Peter, that he *cured such as were troubled with unclean Spirits, Acts v. 16.* Philip likewise at Samaria did many *Wonders and Signs, and many that had unclean Spirits were healed by him, Acts viii. 7.* And lastly, St. Paul did in like manner cure those that were *possessed of evil Spirits, Acts xix. 12.*

The second Sign here promised was, that They who believe in Christ, should *speak with New Tongues.* The Descent of the Holy Ghost, so particularly described, *Acts ii.* is a sufficient Confirmation of this. At that time, *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues as the Spirit gave them Utterance, ver. 4.* And the People of the several Parts of the World that happened to be there present, *heard them speak, in their respective Tongues, the wonderful Works of God, ver. 11.* This Gift was likewise granted to the *Gentiles*, who were assembled with *Cornelius* to hear the Gospel from *Peter*: When the Gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on Them, *They spoke with Tongues, and magnified God, Acts x. 45, 46.* And it is plain that this Gift was not

uncommon at *Corinth*, as appears from St. *Paul's* Account of the spiritual Gifts amongst them, 1 *Cor.* xii. 10. xiv. 5, &c. And when the Twelve Disciples of *John* at *Ephesus* received the Holy Ghost, *they spake with Tongues and prophesied*, Acts xix. 6.

A *Third* Sign was, *They shall take up Serpents* without any hurt, an Instance of which we meet with, *Acts* xxviii. 5. where a *Viper* having fastned on St. *Paul's* Hand, *He shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.*

As to the Sign joined with this—*If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them*—Tho' we have not an Instance in the New Testament of this, yet the Powers actually granted shew, that it is not incredible but that some or other might have had it in that Age of Miracles.

The *Last* Sign is—*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* There is no occasion to mention any other Instances of this, than that *when the Father of Publius* lay sick of a Fever and Bloody Flux, *Paul* laid his hands on him and healed him, *Acts* xxviii. 8.

There is then no doubt but the *Apostles* and *Others*, received and exerted these extraordinary Powers, as proper Occasions offered. But our Saviour assuring the *Apostles*, that *These Signs shall follow them that believe*, a Question arises about the Meaning and Extent of the Words,—*Them that Believe.* Do they imply,

imply, that ALL such as believe *Jesus* to be *The Christ* shall be enabled to exert these extraordinary Powers? Or do they mean, that *All* shall have *All* these Powers? Or do they signify, that Those who have a *miraculous Faith*—such a Faith as will enable a Man to remove Mountains—They shall be enabled to manifest these Signs? If the Former be the true meaning of the Word *Believe*, as I think it is, then How was the Promise made good, since ALL that *believe* are not *Workers of Miracles*; neither have ALL the Gifts of Healing; neither do ALL *speak with Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30. And yet in virtue of the Promise made, that *These Signs shall follow them that believe*, it should seem that *All Believers* should have those extraordinary Powers. To clear up this Matter let it be observed,

1. It is plain from the New Testament, that the Gifts of the Spirit were not all granted to any One of the Disciples of Christ, unless it were to the *Apostles* alone. As to all others—The Gifts of *Healing* were to some; to others the *working of Miracles*; to others *Prophecy*; to others *discerning of Spirits*; to others *divers kinds of Tongues*; to others still *the Interpretation of Tongues*, 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10. It is not my Design to enter into a particular Discussion of the Nature of the several Gifts of the Spirit; but to observe only, That if the promised Signs had *all* been intended to be given to *All Believers*, then *Every one* that Believes
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in Christ, might have had some reason to expect *All* these Powers. But as in Fact, the Gift of *Healing* was granted to One, and That of *Tongues* was given to Another—We must understand the Promise of our Lord, not that *All Believers* were to have *all* these Signs; but that among them that believed in Him, *Some* should have *Some* Gifts, *Others* should have *Others*. Again,

2. The Intent of our Lord in these Words was not, That *ALL*, in all *future Generations*, *for ever*, who should believe in him, should be enabled to work Miracles; or that those *Signs* should be continued to, or among *Believers*, till his second coming. For were That the case, it would follow, that there was now *no Faith* upon Earth, or that there were no *Believers* now, since none are now able to shew their Faith by their miraculous Works. There must then be a proper Limitation to those Words—*Them that believe*: And as the Declaration was made to the *Apostles*, who were to go and preach the Gospel to all Nations, The Words may mean no more than This—Go ye into all the World, and make Disciples of *ALL* People: And as *You* have received a Power to work *Miracles*, so shall *Others* that Believe receive a like Power; Some in One kind, Some in Another, as God shall see most fit and proper. But *how long* these Powers were to continue, or *when* they should cease, cannot be argued from these

these Words. It is enough that the Fact was true, according to the Promise.

3. There seems to have been a Necessity that our Saviour, and his immediate Followers, should have exerted miraculous Powers at that Time, since they were to open the Kingdom of Heaven, and to preach the Gospel to the World. But the same reason does not seem to hold equally necessary in after times, when the Religion of Christ became fully planted in the World. *Jesus* himself appeared in a manner which the *Jews* did not expect : And had they studied the Scriptures without Prejudice, yet the Prophecies concerning the Christ were only *in part* fulfilled by our Saviour, either during his Life, or at his Death. Could then the *Jews* be any ways assured that He was *The Christ*, when several Prophecies concerning *The Christ* were not yet compleated ? Which way could they possibly see *Jesus* to be a *Prince*, or to have *the Government on his Shoulders*, when they saw him nothing but a *Man of Sorrows*, and *cut off from the Land of the Living* ? Miraculous Powers therefore were necessary *Attestations* of God to *Jesus* ; and after his Death to his *Disciples*, to assure them that He was *The Christ* ; and to shew the Reasonableness of Believing Him to be the Person designed in all the Prophets, tho' all things were *not actually fulfilled* that had been spoken, but were gradually *fulfilling*. When the Time
was

was come, that either *The Messiah* must have made his Appearance, or else that He could not appear at all; *i. e.* When *the Scepter* was departed from *Judah*, and the *Jewish* State and Government was at an End, (*Before* which time the *Messiah* was to come, according to the Prophets) and their Temple was destroyed, and the People were dispersed, there ceased to be the same reason for *Miraculous Attestations*, as there was before. For then an honest Perusal of the Scriptures would shew how all things *were* fulfilled, or *might* be fulfilled; and every one might be able to determine, that He in whom all the Prophecies to that time agreed was in truth *The Christ*.

But then in regard to the *Gentiles*, the case seems different. They had no Knowledge of the Scriptures, nor were they acquainted with the Prophets. Miracles therefore were necessary *Attestations* to Them, that *Jesus* was the Person who was *Lord of all*, and to whom *all Power in Heaven and Earth*, and *all Judgment was committed*: *Miraculous Attestations*, I say, were necessary *at that Time*: But when the *Gentile* Converts had the Scriptures in their Hands, and could examine into the Truth, and could see how exactly the Prophecies of Scripture were fulfilled in our Saviour, and could teach and explain to Others what they understood, or might understand, Themselves; then *miraculous Attestations* seem

seem not so *necessary* for the Propagation of the Gospel; seeing the same Design might be carried on without Miracle. It depended entirely on the good Will of God, in what manner, and in what degree, and at what Time, and on what Persons, He would confer such Powers^a. “It was not necessary,” say the *Apostolical Constitutions*, (a Book which carries manifest Marks of not being the Work of Them whose Name it bears; however, of good Authority in this case.) “It was not necessary, that Every Believer should cast out Devils, or raise the dead, or speak with Tongues, but that whosoever was thought worthy to have a Gift for any useful Purpose,” should use it “for the Salvation of Unbelievers.”

4. Whoever then reads the New Testament with Care, will find, that whether miraculous Gifts did, or did not, continue in the Church after the Apostolic Age, God has not left Himself *without witness* in the World; but has given so full Assurance of the Truth of the Gospel, that it must be great Negligence, or Carelessness, or something very faulty, to overlook or despise the Evidence which That affords. But it is foreign to my Subject, to enter further into this Subject.

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^a Οὐκ ἐπ' ἀνάγκης ἔν πάντα πρὸν δαίμονας ἐμβάλλειν, ἢ νεκροὺς ἀνίσταν ἢ γλώσσαις λαλεῖν· ἀλλὰ τ' ἀξιοθέντα χάρισμα-
τος ὅτι πνευ αἰτία χρησίμη εἰς σωτηρίαν τ' ἀπίστων. Const.
Apost. Lib. viii. c. 1.

5. It may be worth while to observe, that notwithstanding every extraordinary or miraculous Power is called *χάρισμα*, a Gift; and granting it to be true, that there are none who believe in Christ, or thro' Christ in God, who have not received *χάρισμα*, a Gift; yet it must not be inferr'd from such Expression, that *every one* who is said to receive *χάρισμα*, a Gift, received one of the *miraculous* Sort. The Antients put a just Distinction between *spiritual Gifts*. They maintained, ^b “ That there is no Man that believed “ in God thro' Christ, who has not received “ a spiritual Gift.” Accordingly they said, “ ^c That to have been delivered from the “ *Impiety of Polytheism*, and to have *believed* “ in God the Father thro' Christ, is the Gift “ of God. So too, to have cast off the *Jewish* “ *Veil*, and to have *believed*, that by the “ good Will of God, the only begotten be- “ fore

^b Ἐπεὶ ἐκ ἑσιν ἀνδρωπῶν πσδύσαι διὰ χριστοῦ εἰς τὸ θεόν, ὅς ἐκ ἑλήψε χάρισμα πνδμάτικόν. Apost. Constit. Lib. viii. c. i.

^c Αὐτὸ τε γὰρ ἀπαλλαγῆναι πολυθέας ἀσεβείας, καὶ πσδύσαι θεῷ πατρὶ διὰ χριστοῦ χάρισμα ὅτι θεός. Τὸ τε ὑπορρίψαι τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν κάλυμμα, καὶ πσδύσαι ὅτι εὐδοκία θεῷ ὁ πρὸ αἰῶνων μονογενὴς ἐν ὅσῳ καιρῷ ἐκ παρθένου γενένηται δίχα ὁμιλίας ἀνδρός· καὶ ὅτι ἐπολιτῶσατο ὡς ἀνδρωπῶν ἀνεὺ ἁμαρτίας, πληρώσας πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην τὴν τοῦ Νόμου· καὶ ὅτι συλχωρήσας θεῷ σαρκενὴν ὑπέμεινεν ἀσχυῆς καταφρονήσας ὁ θεὸς λόγον· καὶ ὅτι ἀπέθανε, καὶ ἐτάφη καὶ ἀνέστη διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν, καὶ μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας παρεμείνας τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, καὶ πληρώσας πᾶσαν διδάξιν ἀναλήφοντα ἐπ' ὁφείον αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἀποστείλαντα αὐτὸν θεόν καὶ πατέρα. Ὁ ταῦτα πσεύσας, ἐχέπλωσ ἐδὲ ἀλόγως, ἀλλὰ κρίσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ, χαρισματικῶς ἀληθεύει ἐκ θεοῦ. Constit. Apost. Lib. viii. c. i.

“ fore all Ages was, in the last time, born
 “ of a Virgin without Converse with Man ;
 “ and that as Man he lived without Sin, hav-
 “ ing fulfilled all the Righteousness of the
 “ Law ; and that by the Permission of God,
 “ God the Word, *despising the Shame, en-
 “ dured the Cross* ; and that he *died*, and was
 “ buried, and arose in Three Days ; and af-
 “ ter his Resurrection, having continued
 “ with the Apostles forty Days, and having
 “ fulfilled all that was appointed, was taken
 “ up in their Sight to God the Father that
 “ sent him ; He that has believed these
 “ things—with Judgment and in full Assu-
 “ rance, has received *χάρισμα*, a Gift from
 “ God.” The Author goes on, and gives a
 very good piece of Advice : ^d “ Let not,”
 says he, “ any one of those, who work *Signs
 “ and Wonders*, judge, or condemn, any one
 “ of the Faithful that is not deemed worthy
 “ to *work* them : For the *χαρίσματα*, the
 “ Gifts of God, which are given by Him
 “ thro’ Christ, are different ; for *you* have
 “ received *This*, another has received some
 “ other ; either the Word of *Wisdom*, or of
 “ *Knowledge*, or of *Discernment of Spirits*,
 “ or *Foreknowledge* of things to come, or the

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“ Word

^d Μὴ ἔν τις τῶ ποιόντων σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα κρίνῃ τι πρὸς τὴν
 τῶν μὴ ἀξιοῦντα ἐνεργεῖν ; Διαφορὰ γὰρ ὅτι τὰ τῶ θεοῦ χα-
 ρίσματα, παρ’ αὐτοῦ διὰ χρίστος διδόμενα. Καὶ σὺ μὲν εἴληπας
 τὸ ἐκείνου· δεῦτε ἄλλο τι ἢ λόγον σοφίας, ἢ γνώσεως, ἢ
 διακρίσεως πνευμάτων, ἢ πρόγνωσιν τῶ μελλόντων, ἢ λόγον δι-
 σκρίτου, ἢ ἀνεξιχνίασιν, ἢ ἐξουσίαν ἐννομον. Ibid.

“ *Word of Teaching, or Patience, or Continence.*” All these are here called the *Gifts* of God; and all are to be used according to his Will who gives them.

The Word then *χαρίσματα*, or *Gift*, signifies an *extraordinary Endowment*; and being a general Word, it comprehends not only the *miraculous* Gifts of the Spirit, such as curing the Sick, or restoring Eyes to the Blind, or Feet to the Lame, or Life to the Dead; but it equally expresses such Acts of *Faith* and *good Life*, as every sincere Believer was wont to practise; such as *bearing Evils, Continence*, and such like. If therefore any ancient Writer speaks of the *Gifts* of God, with which good Men were particularly endowed, it does not follow that such Men had a Power of *working Miracles*, unless it be expressly said, that the *Gifts* they had were of the *miraculous* Kind. But, to return to the Words of our Saviour.

6. Tho’ the Words in St. *Mark*, taken at large, may possibly signify — *All these Signs shall be given to every particular Believer*, so that *every one* shall be enabled to work every one of them: Or they may signify — These Signs shall be given to Believers, some to one, some to another; and some shall have no miraculous Gifts, tho’ All shall have some spiritual Gift or Endowment—Tho’, I say, from the Words used by our Saviour one cannot determine with Precision the Extent of the Promise,

mise, yet one may recur to History and Experience, and from thence one may with tolerable Exactness assign the Meaning of those Words. Thus, when our Saviour told his Apostles that the Holy Spirit *should guide them into ALL Truth*---From the mere Expression one cannot say, whether He was to guide them into all *Philosophical* and *Mathematical* Truth, or whether the general Word is not to be confined to *all Truth relative to the Messiah*, and the Means of setting up his Kingdom. As the Event must determine the Extent of such *universal* Propositions, no one must argue from the bare Words, that the Apostles were led into *all* Sorts of Truth universally, because they had a Promise made them, that might possibly imply such a Meaning.

When indeed a Proposition is universal, *e. g. Children obey your Parents in all things*--and common Sense limits it by the plain Absurdity of taking the Words as universally as the Expression is, the Case is clear. And in general it is so in all *moral* Writings, where Words are not to be understood strictly, as in *Physical* or *Mathematical* Discourses.

But here it may be suggested, that a *Promise* is made; and in Cases of *Promises* or *Grants*, no Limitation is to be admitted, but what the Words themselves, which convey the Right, admit. If a Promise be *universal*, and the Performance be *partial*, the Grantee receives not the Thing promised, but
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at best a *Part* only of what he had reason to expect. If therefore our Saviour assured his Apostles, that such or such Signs should follow them that *believe*, all that *believe* have reason to expect the Performance of the Promise.

But This Difficulty ceases, provided we can know the *real Intention* of him that makes the Promise. For however a Promise may be expressed, if we by any means can tell what is the *Intention* of the Grantor, we ought to interpret the *Words* of the Grant by the *Intention* and *Design* of him that makes the Promise; and not argue that more *must* have been *intended*, because the *Words* made use of may seem to imply more. In the case of a Being whom we know antecedently to be *pure, holy, just*, one may be certain from the *Grant given*, what was the *Intention* of the Promise made; and in consequence, that the general Words made use of must be understood with Limitation, if it appears *in fact* that the Promise is limited. Supposing then that the Words in St. *Mark* were verified only in this limited manner, *viz.* That Some who did believe the Gospel did in fact exert extraordinary *miraculous* Powers, Some in one kind, Some in another, and Others still who enjoyed Spiritual Endowments, yet did no Miracles—One might argue justly from the Effect to the Cause, that this was the full *Intent* of the Promise of our Saviour, because this was all that was made good.

But

But supposing that the Promise of our Saviour was made good to *All* that Believed at first, and that *All* the First Christians had Supernatural Endowments poured out upon them; or supposing that Only *Some Believers* had miraculous Gifts bestowed upon them, it cannot be inferr'd from the Words of our Lord, *How long* those *Signs* were to continue, or *When* they were to *cease*, any more than you can infer that the Apostles were to live *for ever*, because a Promise was made in general Words, which may signify to be with *them always, even unto the End of the World*. It neither follows that *any now a-days* shall be impowered to work Miracles; nor that any in the Ages following the Apostolic Age could expect such a Privilege; but the *Fact* is to be examined into, and a diligent Enquiry is to be made, *How long* the miraculous Powers did subsist, and whether *They do subsist* to this Day, or not.

7. It may be worth while to enquire, whether *All* Christians at first had, or had not, some Extraordinary Powers conveyed to them at their Baptism into Christianity. If it be admitted, That *All* Christians had not *All* Gifts, as seems very clear from many Passages in the New Testament, yet had not *All* Christians *some* Gift or other *given them to profit withal*?

That *All* Christians had *spiritual Gifts* imparted to them, (taking the Word *Gift*, as
above

above explained) must certainly be admitted. But that *All* had *miraculous* Powers, is nowhere, I think, asserted in the New Testament. Under this Term, *miraculous Powers*, I comprehend all those Supernatural Endowments, which our Lord intended by the Term *Signs*: Such as *casting out Devils, speaking with Tongues, healing the Sick, Prophecy, discerning of Spirits*, and such like. But as to inward Graces, extraordinary bearing up against Evils, great Virtues, great Honesty, Sobriety, Steadiness, Courage, &c. — These are not the Subjects of the present Enquiry.

When the First Disciples were made to the Number of *Three Thousand*, and were baptized, it is not said that *any* of them did any *Miracles*, but only that *Signs and Wonders were done by the Apostles*, *Acts ii. 43.* This Conversion being made at the Time when the Holy Ghost descended, and manifested himself by the Apostles speaking with Tongues — Had the *Three Thousand* been *all* endowed with a Power of working *Miracles*, it could not but have been taken notice of. And so again, when the Disciples were increased to about *Five Thousand*, and *Peter* and *John* were commanded by the High Priest and Others not to preach any more in the Name of *Jesus*, The Apostles went to their own Company, and made a Report of all that the chief Priests and Elders had said unto them. Upon this

this they magnify God, and pray, *that Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy holy Child Jesus, and that with all boldness they may speak thy word*, Acts iv. 29, 30. What was the Result of this? It is added immediately——*When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Here were Two Things prayed for; the One was, that they might with all boldness speak the word; the Other was, that Signs and Wonders might be done by the name of Jesus.* When the Holy Ghost fell on them, it is observed, *They ALL spake the Word of God with Boldness:* But as to the *Apostles*, it is remarked of *Them*, that *with great Power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.* Would this Difference have been observed, if All there present had been endowed with Supernatural Powers to work *Miracles*? Would the *great Power* of the *Apostles* have been so particularly mentioned, if *all others* had had the like Power? Or would it not more naturally have been said, that *Signs and Wonders were done* by ALL, had this been the case, than that *ALL spake the Word of God with boldness*? So again, it is said, *Acts v. 12. 16. By the hands of the Apostles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the people: and the multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem brought Sick Folks, and*
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them which were vexed with unclean Spirits ; and they were healed every one. These extraordinary Cures were not performed by the common Christians, which were now grown numerous enough ; but by *Peter* and the *Other Apostles* : And when any other particular Person was blessed with such extraordinary Privilege, he is named as exerting such power, and distinguished from the rest of the Disciples. Thus we find *St. Stephen* mentioned as *a Man full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost*, who *did great Wonders and Miracles among the people.* Acts vi. 5, 8. And *Philip* did Miracles in *Samaria*, and *baptized both men and women.* But tho' he *baptized* the Converts in *Samaria*, and by that initiated them into Christianity, (which was a plain Declaration that they were *Believers*) yet no *Signs* were done by these Christians ; for they did not receive the *Holy Ghost* till some time after this, when *Peter and John* came thither, and *prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost ; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord.* Chap. viii. 14--17. It is evident from hence, that *some* Christians professed openly enough a *Faith* in Christ, and were *baptized* in his Name, and yet did not receive *the Holy Ghost*, so as to work Miracles, till God, according to his good Pleasure, and as he saw fit, was pleased to grant this Privilege : and in consequence *all* Christians did not receive the *mi-*

raculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, but such only as were deemed worthy of such extraordinary Communication.

Whilst I am speaking concerning this extraordinary Endowment which many of the First Christians had, one cannot omit to take notice of *Two* Instances that have something very peculiar in them.

The *First* is, That of *One*, who was *not* an *Apostle*, who yet *imparted* the *Holy Ghost* to another. It seems to have been a peculiar Privilege of the *Apostles* by Imposition of Hands to impart the Holy Ghost: When therefore *Ananias* imparted the Holy Ghost to St. *Paul*, it must be observed, that He had a particular Direction for that purpose. For tho' he, and probably many others, had themselves, or were *filled* with the Holy Ghost, yet it does not appear that they ever did, or could, communicate it to Others, excepting this one Case. However, St. *Paul* having now received it, as he did his Eye-sight, immediately began to execute the Office to which he was called. *Acts ix. 17, &c.*

The other Case is, That of the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon *Cornelius* and his Family, who seem to have been, or more properly, were, the *First-fruits of the Gentiles*. What was peculiar here was, that the Holy Ghost fell on them *before* they were *baptized*. For whilst St. *Peter* was preaching to them our Saviour, that He was *Lord of all*, that

He was *risen from the Dead*, and was *appointed Judge of quick and dead*; that *all the Prophets gave witness to him*, that *thro' his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins* — while *Peter yet spake these words*, the *Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*. The Effect of this Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them was, that *Peter*, and those with him, *heard them speak with Tongues, and magnify God*. When this Fact was so notorious, *St. Peter* asked, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Acts x. 36--48.

In this Instance miraculous Powers or Signs followed them that *believed, before they were baptized*. But in what manner soever the Holy Ghost descended, *the Churches walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were multiplied*. Acts ix. 31. Or as it is *Acts xiii. 52. The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost*. They all had inward Comfort and Satisfaction, and they went on increasing and multiplying, notwithstanding the Opposition they met with, either from Persecution by the *Jews*, or from the Distresses which *Paul* and *Barnabas* had fallen into; and they believed, and *spoke very freely, the Truths of the Gospel*, openly alledging that *Jesus was the Christ*. But that every particular Disciple was enabled to work *Signs and Wonders*, of
any

any sort, seems to have been a Fact unknown to St. *Luke*, since he mentions so frequently the *Signs and Wonders* done by the *Apostles*, and names some particular Persons, who made Converts by such extraordinary Acts, *vid. cap. xiv. 3.* but never observes, that *all* Christians had it in their Powers to exert so remarkable an Endowment, tho' all received *spiritual Gifts*.

But tho' particular Instances are not producible, are there not some Texts which imply, that *all* that were *baptized* received the *Holy Ghost*? And if *all* were *filled* with the *Holy Ghost*, had not *all* supernatural Gifts? The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* says, *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost—if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.* Chap. vi. 4—6. It is plain from these Words, that Those who were *once enlightened*, and those who were *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, are the same: Now as all Christians are *enlightened* with the Knowledge of the Doctrines of Christ, and in consequence were all Baptized, (for the Doctrine of *Baptisms* was just before mentioned as a *Principle* or *Foundation*) hence *all* Christians must have been *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*. The same may seem to be inferr'd from the Passage of St. *Mark*, under our present Consideration; in which such as *believe*, is of the same Extent

tent with such as are *baptized* in the preceding Verse. *He that Believeth and is Baptized, shall be saved—And these signs shall follow them that believe.* Now as *all* Christians were *baptized*, must not the Promise of the Signs here made, extend to *all*? And when St. Paul says—*The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal—*1 Cor. xii. 7. the Conclusion must be, that every particular Person did *partake* of the *Holy Ghost*.

All this Difficulty vanishes, if the Writers of the New Testament did not mean by being *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*, a being vested with a Power of exerting *miraculous Acts*. If they sometimes meant no more by *partaking of the Holy Ghost*, than a *Boldness in speaking* the Truths of the Gospel; sometimes a *Conviction*, or a *full Persuasion* of Mind, that Jesus was the Christ; sometimes a *Zeal* in striving to *excel to the edifying of the Church*; sometimes an Increase in spiritual *Knowledge*, or *understanding* the Scriptures; sometimes *good Dispositions* arising from a Belief of God thro' Christ—*All* Christians might have some or other of These Gifts, and thus be *Partakers* of the *Holy Ghost*, and yet not be enabled to work any *Miracle*. *Every Man* was to profit Himself and Others by the Gift he had, be it what it would: If he *understood* the Scriptures; if he *believed* in God the Father; if he *believed* in Christ; if he *spake*
the

the Word with *Boldness*; if he *endured* in Times of Trial with Courage and Resolution; if he resisted unto Death, unmoveable,—— These and such like Endowments were the Gifts by which a Manifestation of the Spirit was made, as well as the *miraculous* Gifts, which were dispensed according to the good Will and Pleasure of God.

It is said indeed by St. Peter, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.* But it is plain, that he does not mean that *every one* that was baptized should *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost*; but his Exhortation is, that every one should be baptized: and then a Declaration is made, that they should *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost*. Not that *every one* was to have a Power of working *Miracles*; but that every one that believed, and was baptized, should be enabled to act as a true Christian. Some should speak boldly for the Truth: Some should bear Evils for it with Patience, with Courage, with Resolution: All would be mightily confirmed by what they saw done by Men of all Conditions, who had miraculous Endowments, and extraordinary Qualifications committed to them.

Nor can more be intended by these Words, since we find the Brethren commanded to
 LOOK OUT *for men full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom,*

Wisdom, whom the Twelve were to appoint to the Office of Deacons. *Acts* vi. 3. If *all* had these Qualifications, or supernatural Endowments, and could do, as *Stephen* did, *great Wonders and Miracles among the people*, ver. 8. there seems to have been no Occasion to *look out* for Men of the Abilities here required, since *every* Man was in Possession of them. If *every* Man has the Power of *thinking* and *moving*, would any one require another to *look out* for a Person who has these Powers; or might not the First Man that was met with answer these Characters?

And so again, when our Saviour said—*He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow Rivers of Living Water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. John* vii. 38. General as these Words are, they do not imply that every Believer in Christ should receive *miraculous Powers*; but that such as believed in him should be fully enabled to *teach* and practise the Doctrine of Life, being confirmed in the Faith by the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

But it is needless to examine more Passages of Scripture relating to this Subject. Enough is said, to shew that the Meaning of our Saviour in the Passage of *St. Mark* under Consideration is no more than this; — “ Go and
 “ teach all Nations, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*,
 “ and *preach the Gospel to every Creature*. No
 “ Distin-

“ Distinction is, or will be, made betwixt
“ them ; but whosoever *believeth* and is *bap-*
“ *tized* shall be *saved*, and shall partake of
“ the Holy Ghost. And *these Signs shall fol-*
“ *low them that believe*, be they *Jews* or *Gen-*
“ *tiles* : In my Name shall Devils be cast
“ out, and Miracles of all sorts shall be per-
“ formed, by both *Jews* and *Gentiles*” —
in Attestation of that Great Truth, that *Jesus*
is the Christ the Son of God, in such manner as
shall seem most proper, and according to the
Good-will of God.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

- P. 32. l. 16. for *it be*, r. *it to be*. And p.
54. l. 4. for *We believe*, r. *we to believe*.
P. 64. l. 11. for *Ec.* r. *xvii.* 3.

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